

HOW BRITISH ARMS FUEL UKRAINE WAR

>>Pages 6, 17 and 20

THE TIGHTENING GRIP OF POWER BLOC POLITICS

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SLEAZE, CORRUPTION, COVID FAILING,
SEXISM, WARMONGERING, RACISM...

BRING DOWN FILTHY TORIES



(left to right) Disgraced MP Owen Paterson, disgraced Baroness Mone, disgraced Johnson and Sunak, and disgraced porn watching ex-MP Neil Parish

PRICES SURGE

Cold, hunger and fear—reality of cost of living crisis

AN AVALANCHE of evidence is showing the human cost of surging prices and the falling value of pay, benefits and pensions.

It reflects millions of people facing cold, hunger, fear, illness—and possibly death. It's urgent there's a sustained fightback for decent pay and benefits.

>>Pages 4&5

WORKERS' RIGHTS



Fighting for a union in the giant US firms

WORKERS IN the US are challenging for the right to organise unions in multinational corporations such as Amazon and Starbucks.

Sophie Squire speaks to the people fighting back, and looks at the battles still to be won.

>>Pages 10&11

FIGHTING OPPRESSION

Workers take on bigots with a 'school pride' strike

IN A defiant stand against bigotry, teachers at John Fisher Catholic School in Purley, south London, are striking to fight an attack on an LGBT+ children's author.

It's a great example of how workers can use their collective strength to fight against oppression.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'The Commons is like a boys' prep school. The inmates haven't quite got to 13'

Caroline Nokes, Tory MP

'Politics attracts a certain type of particularly macho willy-waving man'

Nokes again

'I don't think there's necessarily a huge culture here, but I think it does have to be dealt with, and dealt with seriously'

Porn-watching MP Neil Parish explaining how the porn-watching MPs should be dealt with

'I'm sorry you married a fucking idiot'

Now former Tory MP Neil Parish, who was caught watching pornography in the Commons, apologises to his wife

'Funnily enough it was tractors I was looking at'

Parish explains how he found himself sitting in the commons chamber looking at pornography



Nothing more British than tax avoiding and drug dealing

THE PREMIER of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), a notorious British-administered Caribbean tax haven is in trouble.

US agents arrested him on drug trafficking and money laundering charges at an airport in Miami last week

The islands' governor, John Rankin, confirmed in a statement that Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents had arrested Andrew Fahie, the elected premier of the BVI.

Meanwhile, foreign secretary Liz Truss, UK foreign secretary, said she was "appalled by these serious allegations". Perhaps Truss should not feign such surprise.

More than 370,000 secretive companies are registered in the BVI, controlling

hundreds of billions of dollars of assets around the world.

The Panama Papers and other leaked documents revealed the web of corruption that included BVI dealings.

Tycoons from around the world use secretive holding companies to hide the ownership of valuable assets from public view, and to avoid tax.

A criminal complaint and affidavit filed in Florida's southern district court said Fahie was detained along with Oleanvine Maynard, manager of the BVI ports authority.

The court document said undercover DEA agents posing as cocaine traffickers trapped Fahie and Maynard after a series of secret meetings.

These were said to be to discuss bribes in return for



Andrew Fahie

guaranteeing three-tonne cocaine shipments from Colombia through the BVI to the US.

In one of the meetings, according to the court filings, Fahie had pulled out a calculator to work out that his 12 percent share of the

proceeds from selling the shipment in the US would be £6.25 million.

Agents arrested Fahie after he had inspected over £500,000 in cash stashed in shopping bags, part of his supposed pay-off for helping the traffickers, the filing said.

Maynard was arrested later in a separate sting after inspecting the same stash of cash.

Fahie made his name by lashing out at accusations of corruption at the highest levels of the BVI government and collusion with drug traffickers levelled by Rankin's predecessor as governor.

He will now face a trial. But the biggest villains, in the boardrooms and cabinet offices of the capitalist world, escape.

PRITI PATEL is set to hire private jets to send asylum seekers to Rwanda after airlines reportedly refused. The Home Secretary is reportedly furious that they won't help her take away the rights of refugees.

The Sun newspaper reports a source said, "Just like when we try to deport foreign national offenders, we know that some woke commercial airline executives will bend to the social justice warriors on Twitter. Because of this, we need to look at options of chartering flights."



Priti Patel

NATWEST BANK is raking in money during the cost of living crisis. It revealed last Friday that its pre-tax operating profit just for the first three months of the year was £1.2 billion.

That was 40 percent up on the same period in the previous year. Chief executive Alison Rose will potentially grab a maximum bonus 43 percent higher than last year.

The bank is also benefiting from buying back its shares. It buys them for 220.5p, very significantly below the 50p per share that the government paid in 2008 to bail it out.

PPE scams lead to raids on Tory peer

POLICE RAIDED the London home of Tory peer Michelle Mone last week as part of a fraud probe into over £203 million of PPE deals.

The National Crime Agency is investigating deals by PPE Medpro, a company set up by a business associate of Baroness Mone and featured before in Troublemaker.

Mone's £11 million London home, owned by an offshore company linked to her husband's Isle of Man business, is one of a string of properties raided by NCA officers.

Mone, from Glasgow, has denied any involvement with PPE Medpro. However, it was revealed that she



Baroness Mone

referred PPE Medpro to the officer of fellow Tory peer Theodore Agnew.

At the time he was a Cabinet Officer minister responsible for the procurement of PPE.

Anthony Page, PPE Medpro's owner, was at Mone's wedding in 2020.

The NCA is currently investigating the award of contracts for supplying surgical gowns and masks to the NHS.

Britain admits using white phosphorus

DEFENCE minister James Heappey admitted last week that British soldiers deployed white phosphorus mortar rounds on training exercises in Kenya.

He said they provided "illumination for training at night, as well as for smoke screening purposes".

White phosphorus is not currently banned as a chemical weapon but has similar effects to some that are. Human Rights Watch says it is "notorious for the severity of the injuries it causes" and "deeply burns human flesh".

"If fragments of white

phosphorus enter the bloodstream, they can lead to multiple organ failure," the group notes. "Already-dressed wounds can reignite when dressings are removed".

Earlier this month Britain's Defence Intelligence group condemned Russia's use of white phosphorus in Ukraine and warned Vladimir Putin could use the weapon in fighting over Mariupol.

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky has complained to Nato about Russia's use of white phosphorus.

How much porn do MPs watch?

HOW OFTEN do MPs try to access pornography websites from the Commons? Those would be interesting figures in the wake of the revelations about Tory Neil Parish's viewing habits last week.

And at one time you could find out the answer. But you can't now.

In 2017 cabinet minister Damian Green faced allegations of sexual harassment, which he denied.

During the investigation, allegations emerged that pornography had been found on Green's work computer when he was arrested over leaks in 2008. He later resigned as a minister.

At the time, as a result of Freedom of Information requests, you could see on the Commons website that, for example, in September 2016 there were 32,164 attempts made in 30 days to access pornography on parliamentary computers—roughly 1,070 a day.

But if you try to access these figures now you will be taken to a message that says, "Information about access or attempted access to websites have been removed from these pages.

"Parliament's cyber-security team has concluded that, due to the constantly evolving nature of the risks to IT networks, the material may present a security risk if it were to remain publicly accessible on our website."

How very convenient.

Vote Tory get a racist

A TORY candidate in this week's local elections posted about removing immigrants. He also suggested Nadiya Hussein of TV's Bake Off would not receive Islamophobic abuse if she "integrated more" and didn't "wear a headress".

And he backed the bullying of MP Diane Abbott MP.

Stephen Antony Savva, a Conservative Party candidate in Brimsdown, Enfield, responded to one twitter post about immigration with the words, "How about the removal of ALL immigrants? Wouldn't that be wonderful? Just think of all the homes that would suddenly become available? All those school places? No-more have to wait an ion to be seen by a doctor".

The Tory candidate was previously exposed in June 2018 as having called for Islam to be banned.

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Workers take on bigots with ‘school pride’ strike

by SAM ORD

IN A defiant stand against bigotry, teachers at John Fisher Catholic School in Purley, south London, are striking to fight an attack on an LGBT+ author.

Governors of the school voted against the homophobic cancellation of author Simon James Green.

The religious management body, the archdiocese of Southwark, then sacked most of them and appointed new governors. Now teachers at the school are hitting back.

They struck for one day last week and planned two-day strikes for Wednesday and Thursday this week and next week. One teacher told Socialist Worker they hope “to send a sharp message to the archdiocese”.

They added, “We as educators know that inclusion is vital to combat LGBT+ phobia, and the high rates of suicide LGBT+ people experience. Diversity of voices is a remedy to fix that. We have to speak out and stand up against discrimination.”

Around 40 people were picketing last Thursday waving rainbow posters and scarfs with a banner reading, “Reinstate our governors.”

The strike was so strong the school was closed for the day.

Simon James Green, whose books feature LGBT+ characters, was set to talk to pupils on world book day before the school cancelled his event. He sent brownies to the pickets.

Reality

All of those on the picket line want to see him re-invited to spread his message of inclusion and acceptance.

Green said NEU union members at John Fisher School are “standing up for LGBT students everywhere who need to see the reality of their lives in books”.

The new interim board of governors defended the cancellation



FLYING THE rainbow flag during the strike at John Fisher school in London last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

BACK STORY

NEU members at John Fisher school are battling for LGBT+ inclusive education

- They're calling for author Simon James Green to be re-invited to the school
- Governors were advised by church bosses to cancel the event
- They agreed to invite Green anyway, but were then sacked by the archdiocese bosses
- Strikers are leading the way and showing it's right to fight for LGBT+ education for all children

of Green's event. The diocesan education commissioner Simon Hughes claimed that the books incorporate “grooming” content.

He said the event should be cancelled because it fell “outside the scope of what is permissible in a Catholic school.”

Teachers are right to take a stand. The archdiocese has so far refused to negotiate with the NEU, attending Acas arbitration meetings as observers only.

NEU president Daniel Kebede told Socialist Worker, “This is a direct attack on LGBT+ education that was hard fought for. The archdiocese needs to get round the table and

engage in negotiations.”

The striking teachers have received a wave of support from their online rallies, petition and letters.

One group of LGBT+ pupils at Monks Walk School in Hertfordshire wrote, “You have sent a message to LGBT+ students everywhere that there are teachers willing to stand up for us, which makes us feel so supported.”

The teachers will return to picket lines for two days this week, followed by three days next after.

The unity of working class people fighting against oppression deserves the support of all workers and activists against oppression.

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Post Office pay walkout

POST OFFICE workers staged a national strike over pay on Tuesday of this week.

The strike, by members of the CWU union, hit the 114 Crown Post Offices—the major Post Office branches—in Britain. It also disrupted cash deliveries to the 11,500 sub post offices.

The walkout came after workers voted by 97 percent to strike over bosses’ offer of a meagre 3 percent pay increase—well below inflation. Workers were also made to take a pay freeze in 2021. Speaking at the union’s conference last

week, CWU assistant secretary Andy Furey said there could be more strikes to come.

“They made an insulting offer for 2022 on top of the pay freeze for 2021, which just made our members’ determination even stronger,” he said. “If the Post Office leadership want to keep their heads in the sand there will be further strikes.”

Delegates at the conference passed a motion to “ensure a good presence on picket lines.”

Furey said he expected the strike to be “seriously successful.”

Services were hit

Chep UK shows how to fight

CHEP UK pallet workers in Greater Manchester have won a massively improved pay deal after a 21 week-long strike. The 68 Unite union members’ action secured a two-year deal.

It consists of a 9 percent pay rise from now until next year, and a 5 percent backdated pay rise in cash to July 2021 when talks started. The pay rise is equivalent to £2,500 a year.

Unite rep and striker Gary Walker told Socialist Worker, “We see this as a massive victory. We’re going back galvanised and with faith that you can push back.”

Overall, 48 strikers voted in favour of the deal, 22 voted no and seven abstained.

Monitored

Gary added that going forward other issues such as heavy-handed disciplinary tactics and health and safety will be monitored.

And as a result of this dispute, the next pay talks will involve workers from other depots as well.

The longest strike in Unite’s history has led to a huge pay increase from the 1.8 and 2 percent pay offers Chep originally gave.

Almost a third of the strikers voted against the deal, which doesn’t beat the present RPI rate of inflation.

Gary said that the Chep strikers want other workers to see that they can fight back too. “We’re normal working class people. We’ve come together as a group and taken on a huge worldwide company and won,” he said.

“Anyone having second thoughts about striking—look at what we’ve just done.”

Read a longer version of this article at socialistworker.co.uk

IN THIS WEEK

1937

Hindenburg disaster kills 36

DOZENS ARE killed after the Hindenburg airship catches fire while landing in New Jersey, United States.

Public confidence was shattered as a result of the accident and it was the end of the airship era.

Cold, hunger and fear are the face of this cost of living crisis

by CHARLIE KIMBER

BACK STORY

AN AVALANCHE of evidence is showing the human cost of surging prices and the falling value of pay, benefits and pensions.

It reflects millions of people facing cold, hunger, fear, illness—and possibly death.

"By next winter, hundreds of thousands of prepayment customers will be unable to afford to access energy for extended periods of time," predicts Matthew Copeland, head of policy at National Energy Action, a fuel poverty charity.

"People are going to die from this if they can't heat their homes to adequate temperatures."

He says people are already turning off gas and electricity because they are terrified of high bills.

"We often see older people with bus passes going on a journey and coming back simply because being on a bus is warmer than being at home," Copeland said.

The must-buy item this season is not some fashion item but Aldi supermarket's electrically-heated jacket.

It's designed so that people don't have to heat their homes but can instead wear clothing that warms them up.

About four in ten British households are finding it difficult to pay for gas and electricity and a similar proportion are buying less food.

That's according to the first figures from the Office for National Statistics covering the period after the 54 percent rise in the cap on energy bills last month.

Pensioners

People in the core working-age group—those aged 30 to 49—are cutting back most, with a higher share reporting that they had to borrow money, and slashing spending.

That may be because people on benefits and pensioners had already cut their spending to the bone.

Worse is coming. Bosses of the big energy firms recently told MPs of the "totally horrific" consequences if the price cap rises from £1,971 to the expected level of £2,600 in

With inflation rising by 9 percent many people are terrified that they won't be able to put food on the table

- Prices of essential foods, such as pasta, rice and bread are soaring

- Chicken, one of the cheapest meats available, is also set to go up. Co-op chief executive Steve Murrells says that it could soon become as expensive as beef

- The Bank of England is expected to raise interest rates hitting those with mortgages, but also likely to raise rents too

PENSIONERS ARE finding they are warmer on busses than at home as energy bills rise

October. They are nervous that huge numbers of their customers will not be able to pay their bills, which will be a threat to the companies' profits.

By the autumn, the company Eon expects up to 40 percent of its customers to be in fuel poverty—spending more than 10 percent of their income on energy bills.

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Mortgage

This week a Bank of England key committee was widely expected to raise interest rates. That will mean higher mortgage payments and landlords passing on the cost in rent rises.

Such outrages have to be a spur to much more resistance, including a big turnout at the TUC union's federation national demonstration in London on 18 June.

Activists have to push for this protest has to be launchpad for the resistance.

What's needed are waves of big strikes, national action and coordinated action, and major campaigns against disconnections, evictions and poverty.

That means confronting the weakest denials of serial lockdown party guest Boris Johnson.

One source told the paper, "The most shocking thing Sue's report has uncovered is a series of emails which expose the extent to which the parties were premeditated and the rules were wilfully broken. She

Desperate Tories try to dodge heat from multiple scandals

AS ORDINARY people feel the pinch, the Tories scrabble around to continue their rule of cruelty—and chaos.

Those who prowl the corridors of power aren't worried about whether they can afford to heat their homes. They're concerned about who is going to find out they've been quaffing champagne—or worse.

Senior government figures are preparing themselves for the next round of revelations coming from partygate investigator Sue Gray.

The Sunday Times newspaper reports that top civil servants knew they were breaking the law when they organised parties during strict Covid-19 restrictions.

This flies in the face of the weakest denials of serial lockdown party guest Boris Johnson.

One source told the paper, "The most shocking thing Sue's report has uncovered is a series of emails which expose the extent to which the parties were premeditated and the rules were wilfully broken. She

'Tractor' loving Tory Neil Parish

is also concerned by the lack of contrition shown by those who have been found to have broken the rule."

Gray's report is set to be completed when all investigations by the Met have finished.

Elections

And the cops are delaying any more public information about partygate fines until after the local elections this week.

Meanwhile, the Tories are closing ranks after one of their own was exposed as watching

porn in parliament. Tory MP Neil Parish resigned after news broke he was caught watching porn twice.

Beyond farce, vile Parish claimed one of the occasions was accidental as he was searching for a tractor website.

Sleazy Parish claimed that, despite being caught red handed, "I have 12 years in parliament and probably got one of the best reputations ever—or did have."

Initially he tried to cling on to his post as MP while his conduct was investigated, but stepped down on Saturday after public outcry continued to grow.

Top Tories are scrabbling around to make excuses for the rampant sexism in Westminster.

Some, such as business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said it was because MPs "are working in a really intense environment, there are long hours".

Others, such as defence secretary Ben Wallace placed the blame on the "overall culture of long hours, bars and people under pressure".

HUNDREDS

of thousands of cancer patients are at risk because they are forced to cut back on meals, heating and other essentials as a result of soaring prices.

The charity Macmillan Cancer Support said it was "hugely concerning" that large numbers of people living with the disease were having to resort to drastic cost-cutting measures.

Some recovering

from chemotherapy or radiotherapy are sleeping in cold bedrooms to try to keep energy bills down. Others are washing their clothes and bedding less frequently or skipping meals.

About one in four people with cancer in Britain—almost 750,000 people—say they "can't afford life at the moment."

Christopher Jones

of the support line

at Macmillan Cancer

Support, said: "We used to hear about people choosing between eating and heating, but now we are hearing from people who can't afford either."

BORIS JOHNSON has a strategy to escape the sea of corruption around his rule. He poses as the supreme leader whose bullish warmongering against Russia is far more important than any small matters of lockdown party fines or soaring price rises.

We went to press before the local election results but we can be pretty sure that the Tories' response will be, "The people have spoken—the people are wrong."

And the Labour Party seeks to separate the Ukraine war

—where it thinks the government is basically doing the right things—from everything else.

In fact, Johnson is wrong about everything.

His policies are responsible for deepening poverty at the same time as the oil giants are drowning in profits. His policies produce millions of people terrified of spiralling bills in the same week that BP announces record £5 billion profits just for the first three months of the year.

But that's not separate from the reckless fuelling of the war in Number 10 he deserves for so many reasons.

DANGER IN CORNER CUTTING

THE CALLOUS Tory cabinet last week held a special session to discuss how to deal with the crisis.

Grant Shapps, the transport secretary, proposed moving car MOT tests from once a year to once every 24 months, saving a few pounds at the

risk of increasing the number of vehicles that are not safe on the roads.

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi suggested increasing the maximum number of children an early-years worker can be responsible for.

Slightly smaller bills, but a worse service for children and for workers.

Of course no windfall tax on the energy giants, no renationalisation of privatised utilities, no increase in taxes for the rich and the corporations.

Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

WAVE OF PROTEST NEEDED TO DEFEND ROE V WADE

THE UNITED States Supreme Court is poised to savage abortion rights. The threat has to be met with mass revolt.

A document leaked this week shows a terrifying attack on women's rights.

It shows Justice Samuel Alito has written a 98-page draft opinion attacking the landmark 1972 Roe v Wade ruling. "We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled," Alito writes.

Outrageously he claims that supporters of abortion are eugenics who are "motivated by a desire to suppress the size of the African American population".

A majority of the court's judges agreed with this draft decision. A final decision is expected soon.

Although not perfect, Roe v Wade has meant a nationwide basis for women's right to choose whether to have an abortion.

If this new decision stands then it will turn back the clock half a century and leave it entirely up to each individual state to decide what abortion rights exist.

The bigots and the right will celebrate.

In more than two dozen states, lawmakers have prepared bills that

would effectively outlaw abortion if the court overturns Roe v Wade.

If the court embraces Alito's draft opinion it would clear the way for those bills to quickly become law.

Mississippi legislators have already moved to ban abortion after 15 weeks.

In Oklahoma, governor Kevin Stitt signed legislation that could outlaw abortion almost entirely, and in Idaho, a ban on abortion after six weeks is temporarily blocked by the Supreme Court.

In Texas last year the state imposed a ban on most procedures after six weeks of pregnancy. When he was

defeated those rights can't be left to president Joe Biden and the Democrats. They are terrified of the radical measures needed to weaken the court, let alone abolish it as they should.

Protests began within hours of the leaked ruling appearing. Now there needs to be much more.

In 2017 up to five million people took to the streets for the Women's Marches after the inauguration of Trump.

It will take a mass street movement on this scale, and larger, to beat the attack on abortion rights. This movement must also battle for the expansion of abortion services.

And in Britain we need full solidarity with that movement and in support of women's rights here too.

Ukraine. He defends the power of Western imperialism and fattens the arms companies with the same contempt he shows for ordinary people over the cost of living.

Separated off from the European Union's boosting of Nato, Johnson auditions to be the US's most reliable ally.

We need to resist him on every front. Giving him a free pass on the war covers up the real basis of inter-imperialist war. It will also risk him avoiding the ejection from Number 10 he deserves for so many reasons.

Breakfast in RED

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socialistworker.co.uk

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS

Why Ukraine is an imperial proxy war

STRANGELY ENOUGH, supporters of Nato's proxy war with Russia tend to deny that it is a proxy war.

There are exceptions. Leon Panetta, director of the CIA under Barack Obama, admitted in March, "It's a proxy war with Russia whether we say so or not." But Western governments and their apologists still deny this.

The main reason they give is that Russia is actually being fought by the forces of the Ukrainian government, with substantial popular support. Sometimes they say things like, "calling this a proxy war denies the Ukrainians agency" and reduces them to the US's puppets.

The problem perhaps is partly the very word "proxy", which means a person acting on behalf of another. During the Cold War, the US often accused this or that Communist movement in the Third World of being Russia's "proxies".

The implication was that they were just puppets of the Soviet Union. What actually happened showed that different nationalist movements with their own goals and interests used the same Stalinist ideology.

For example, in the second half of the 1970s the Communist regime in Vietnam fought wars against two other Communist regimes, in Cambodia and China.

A genuine example of a proxy in the US Cold War sense would be the right-wing exiles organised and armed by the CIA in the attempted invasion of Cuba in 1961.

In its own way, the Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion shows the continued vitality of nationalism as a mobilising force. But national struggles still unfold in the context of an imperialist system dominated by rival capitalist powers that use smaller states for their own purposes.

The Cold War shows how this leads to proxy wars. In July 1950 the Korean War began when the Communist-led North invaded the Western-dominated South.

Kim Il-sung, the North Korean leader, was eager to reunify the Korean peninsula. But he needed the support of the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, who had put him in power in the first place.

According to Shen Zhihua's fascinating study—Mao, Stalin, and the Korean War—Stalin eventually agreed to the invasion. He hoped to gain access to the southern ports of Pusan and Inchon.

He also thought the US would probably not intervene, but that if it did the new Communist regime in China would bear the brunt of the war. Stalin distrusted the Chinese leader Mao Zedong and believed a confrontation with the US in Korea would make him easier to control.

Partition

In the event, the US did intervene, as did China. They fought each other to a standstill, confirming the partition of Korea that continues today.

The Soviet Union had waged a proxy war with the US, avoiding a Third World War by letting North Korean and Chinese armies do the fighting. Stalin used Kim and Mao, though both were also independent actors with their own ideological motivations and economic and geopolitical interests.

Something similar is happening today. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and his regime represent a particular nationalist project and they are fighting for Ukraine's independence. The US and its allies, however, are backing them up, according to the Financial Times, with "every day, eight to 10 cargo flights, most of them operated by the US, carrying hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of increasingly heavy weaponry", for their own interests.

US defence secretary Lloyd Austin last week spelled out the US's objective—"Russia weakened to the point where it can't do things like invade Ukraine".

So this isn't just a national struggle between Ukraine and Russia. It's also a conflict between imperialist powers. Failing to see this leads to an underestimation of the dangers.

William Burns, the current CIA director, warned recently, "Given the potential desperation of President Putin and the Russian leadership, given the setback they've faced so far militarily, none of us can take lightly the threat posed by a potential resort to tactical nuclear weapons or low-yield nuclear weapons."

Proxy wars are bad, but an all-out inter-imperialist war would be infinitely worse.



Tories give refugees nothing but crackdown and chaos

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE TORY government promised a new crackdown after border guards in the English Channel intercepted seven boats carrying 254 migrants last Sunday.

The Ministry of Defence, which has now been put in charge of border control said the crackdown will target people smugglers.

It's sure to force migrants into attempting even more dangerous crossings.

Right wingers criticised the Tories for failing to stop crossings. That's despite new laws contained in the racist Nationality and Borders bill (see page 7) and the scheme to send refugees to Rwanda.

The plans will mean sending some undocumented migrants who entered Britain via the Channel since 1 January to Rwanda on a one-way ticket.

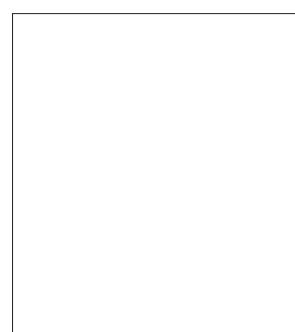
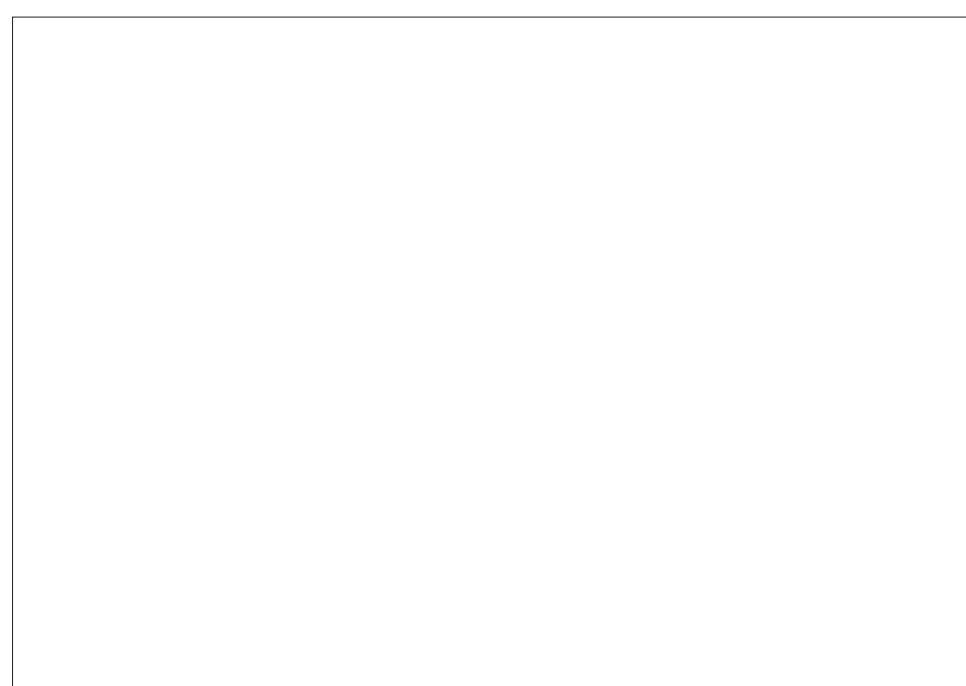
But the Tories will face legal challenges by charities such as Detention Action and Care4Calais.

Force

More than 6,000 people have crossed in small boats this year—and fresh repression won't stop them. Instead, border restrictions and the lack of legal routes force them into the arms of people smugglers.

Meanwhile the Tories' failing Homes for Ukraine scheme is causing chaos. Delays in issuing visas mean some families have been forced to return to Ukraine.

One whistleblower told the Observer newspaper that the scheme has been "designed to fail" and to limit the number



PEOPLE ARRIVE in Dover in a lifeboat (above) border guards capture refugees (left)

of refugees entering. Staff say they don't know what they're doing after only three hours of training and are met with "silence" when suggesting improvements to the system.

Delays between visas being approved and refugees receiving emails with permission to travel is down to a backlog between two teams of civil servants.

Visas are taking up to six weeks to appear. And sponsors are also ditching the scheme.

In west Yorkshire, Holme Valley Homes for Ukraine said that 40 of 160 applicants pulled out because of delays.

Family members are also receiving visas at different times as children attempting to flee Ukraine are being made to wait weeks longer.

Trafficked

Some children are reportedly being trafficked or going missing as they waited for news from the Home Office.

Rebecca Gough, coordinator of the Holme Valley scheme said, "I have seen so many cases of parents without children and children without parents so they can't travel. This scheme

isn't good news, it's a disaster." Immigration minister Kevin Foster told parliament the claim children are not receiving visas was "absolute nonsense".

Yet a week later the government admitted to processing problems within the Home Office.

Only 11,100 of 50,000 people issued visas under the scheme have made it to Britain since it was launched in March.

The Tories brag about their generosity and "safe and legal" scheme into Britain.

But the shambolic scheme for Ukrainian refugees, as well as the failed Afghan refugee scheme, shows that even "legal" ways into Britain are built to keep refugees out.

Anti-fascists prepare to oppose Nazi Robinson

NAZI TOMMY Robinson was set to hold a second rally in Telford on Saturday.

The English Defence League founder wants to relaunch himself by using child sex exploitation cases to further his racist and fascist agenda. But anti-fascists planned a counter-demonstration to oppose Robinson's march.

In January, Robinson called a demonstration to stoke up his lies that child abuse is rooted in Muslim or Asian "culture". It's vital to oppose and beat him back like he has



been before. Robinson is mobilising his forces on the back of the Tories' never-ending crises and failures.

And the Tories constant attacks on refugees, migrants and Muslims has provided a bandwagon for Robinson and the far right to jump on.

Shropshire and Telford Stand Up To Racism said, "Robinson is cynically attempting to use the appalling cases of child grooming in Telford for his own ends. He cares nothing for the victims and only wishes to promote his

racist and Islamophobic agenda.

"On his last attempt to spread hatred and division in Telford hundreds of anti-racists came out to oppose him—but the turn out by the far right was worrying."

It called for activists to "bring your friends, workmates and family, bring your banners and flags" to show "that racists and fascists won't be allowed to divide."

Stand Up To Racism protest Sat 7 May, 1pm, Southwater Square, Telford. Details at bit.ly/NoToTR0522



Mass defiance is answer to rollout of Tory repression

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts bill and Nationality and Borders bill have been passed into law. But it's not too late to fight back and win, explains **Charlie Kimber**

THE TORIES forced through a string of brutally repressive and racist measures into law last Wednesday. They have major implications for protesters, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, refugees, migrants and black people.

In an outrageous symbol of its utterly ineffective opposition, Labour abstained on one of the final key votes over a government assault on refugee rights.

The Nationality and Borders Bill is a racist response to desperate people fleeing war and poverty. It will close even further any legal route to Britain and push refugees into reliance on people smugglers.

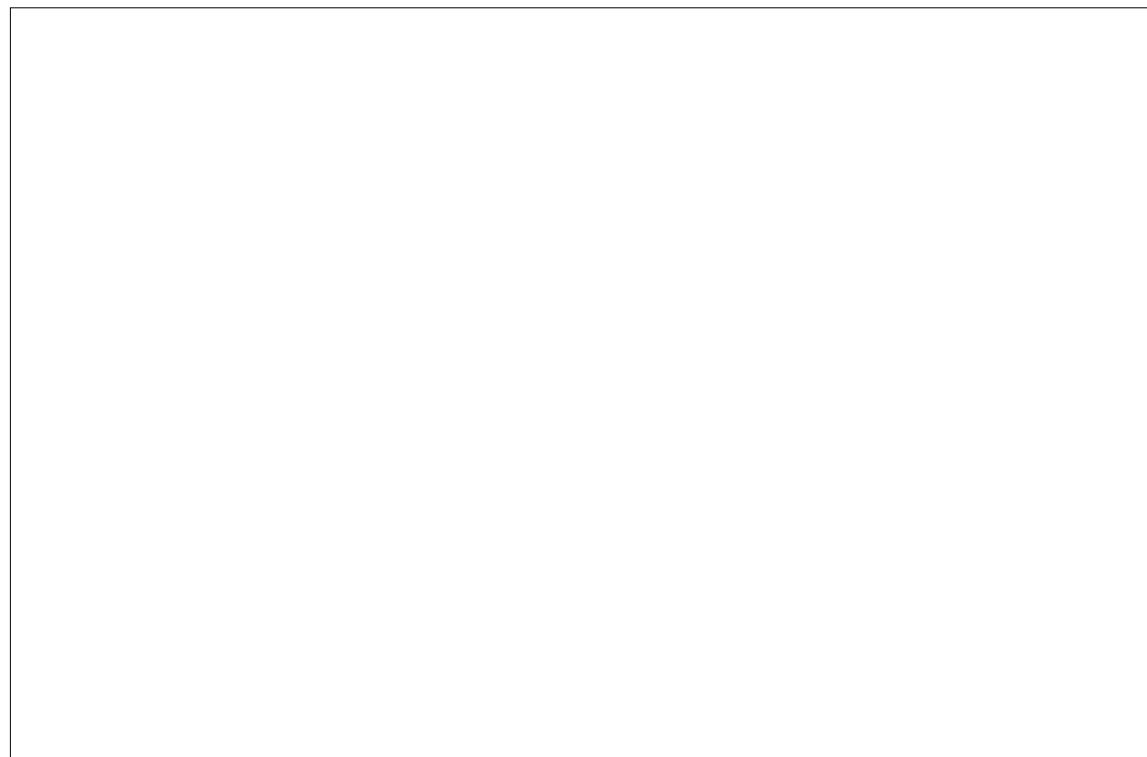
Just as the bill passed through the House of Lords, some peers tried to ensure that Britain would have to follow international regulations on asylum. The Labour Party told its members not to oppose the government.

Comply

Labour lord Prem Sikka tweeted that in a vote on whether to force the government to comply with the Refugee Convention, "The vote was lost by 212-157. Labour abstained."

The battle has to start immediately to defy the law, welcome refugees, block deportations—and repeal the new measures and all racist laws.

The police bill, passed into



KILL THE Bill protest in central London in April 2021

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

law the same day, combines authoritarian populism, a desire to find scapegoats—and a tiny bit of fear.

It also means harsher treatment for groups such as Extinction

Rebellion, Insulate Britain and Just Stop Oil. These, along with Black Lives Matter, were specifically mentioned by the government during the debates around the bill.

But the powers can be used

against any protester or trade union picket.

Labour did oppose most of the bill. But until the outcry after the cops' assault on the Sarah Everard vigil, it was—again—going to

abstain. The law is a real assault. But it's not true, as some people now say, that "protest is banned" or that "fascism has arrived".

Strikes and mass protests are possible and are the way to fight for our rights.

A major problem with the anti-bill movements is that many union leaders failed to encourage any real resistance.

The Kill the Bill movement did mobilise thousands on the streets. But its militancy and strength dwindled.

Similarly, the movement against the Nationality and Borders bill saw real opposition and determined campaigning.

But it was not large enough to overcome government determination and Labour backsliding.

The protests combined many different elements that should continue to work together against the Tories.

Street protests do have the power to enact change. But ramped up and continuous action, including support from unions in the workplace and on the streets, is crucial.

Even now, it is perfectly possible to build a mass protest and launch more strikes.

This is a foul and reactionary government, but we can still fight and win. The best way to defend protest rights is to use them.

Racism and oppression at core of bills targeting minorities

THE NOW passed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill has made it a criminal offence for protesters to cause "serious distress, serious annoyance or serious inconvenience" without "reasonable excuse".

This carries a penalty of up to ten years in jail.

The police can impose restrictions on marches whose "noise" could cause "serious disruption" to a nearby organisation or government department.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups will be targeted, as the law also turns trespass from a civil into a criminal one.

It'll also be a criminal offence to reside in a vehicle on land without permission.

If Gypsies, Roma and

Travellers stop in places that have not been designated for them their homes can be confiscated.

The Friends, Families and Travellers campaign group said, "We're aware of the darkness the criminalisation of trespass could bring to the nomadic way of life.

"It will not eradicate travelling. Instead, it will force those who have nowhere else to go into a direct confrontation with the law."

Attempts to make "locking on" a crime and to give the police greater powers to stop and search without suspicion did not make it through.

The Nationality and Borders bill, as now passed, means legalising measures including



Rally against the Nationality and Borders bill in January

indefinite detention of refugees arriving in Britain. Refugees can be intercepted at sea.

Campaigning, PCS union pressure and the

threat of legal action forced the government to abandon a plan to "push back" dinghies in the English Channel. But a new scheme means

the Royal Navy will take over anti-migrant operations in the Channel.

Offshore processing for refugees is also included in the bill, with the Tories already having struck a deal to deport people to Rwanda.

Knowingly

It will also be a criminal offence to "knowingly arrive" in Britain illegally—that is without the required papers.

Most refugees have to flee war, poverty and environmental collapse without going through all the obstacles of visas and visits to government offices.

Refugees can also be treated differently based on how they entered Britain. Citizenship

rights of people born and growing up in Britain can be blocked.

The home secretary can secretly strip up to six million British people of their citizenship because they could theoretically have citizenship rights in another country.

Amnesty International says, "The home secretary's attempt to paint this bill as targeting ruthless criminal gangs is a cynical distraction from her true intent".

It is "to simply, and at whatever the cost, punish, penalise and deter people who seek asylum".

"It is as ruthless to victims of repression, torture and exploitation as it is exploitative of the racism and prejudice they face," it added.

IN BRIEF**Israel storms Al Aqsa mosque**

ISRAELI FORCES stormed the Al Aqsa mosque in the Palestinian city of Jerusalem on Friday of last week—the latest in a series of attacks.

Riot cops threw stun grenades and tear gas at Palestinians defending the site of the mosque with rocks and fireworks.

At least 42 Palestinians were injured.

The raids come as Israeli settler groups made repeated attempts to enter the mosque.

The groups, backed by the Israeli state, want to push Palestinians out of Jerusalem.

Al Aqsa is a symbol of Palestinians' fight to live freely in their own city. Similar attacks on the mosque last year sparked a wave of revolt across all of Palestine.

Hannah Kenny

Left candidate attacked on campaign trail in Northern Ireland

HANNAH KENNY, a People Before Profit candidate in this week's Northern Ireland election, has spoken of her "terrifying" ordeal in east Belfast in which she was assaulted, threatened and abused by three men.

One of the men grabbed her by the throat and told her in graphic detail what he would do to her if she returned to the area.

She said she was "subjected to a terrifying ordeal which was sectarian and misogynistic in nature".

She said, "I am deeply distressed by the level of aggression shown towards me for simply delivering election material."

People Before Profit said, "Our message is that these minority of bullies do not represent the people of east Belfast, or any area. People Before Profit are standing in all quarters of Belfast to offer a progressive alternative to division, we won't allow intimidation to deter us from doing that."

Deadly heatwaves hit India and Pakistan

by YURI PRASAD

MORE THAN a billion people are suffering a relentless heatwave in India and Pakistan. It's a devastating foretaste of what lies in store for all of humanity in an era of climate change.

Record-breaking temperatures across the sub-continent are already forcing people to stay at home for most of the day—and temperatures have only risen in the last week.

In Rajasthan state in northern India, where few can afford air conditioning, thermometers now regularly read above 44 degrees.

Meanwhile, Jacobabad in Pakistan hit almost 50 degrees last weekend, 11 degrees hotter than the April average.

South Asia's increasingly intense heatwaves are a death sentence for hundreds of the region's poorest people every year.

At least 2,081 people died during India's 2015 heatwave, the country's worst since 1992. "Well-off people will have air conditioners in their homes and offices," gardener Prem Kishore told reporters. "But people like me and those who work in the open areas—how will they survive in such heat?"

The heatwave is the result of what climatologists call a "heat dome".

It happens when atmospheric high pressure stays over the same area for days or even weeks, trapping warm air underneath like a lid on a pot.

Such events are becoming more common. Forecasters say that March was the hottest month India has witnessed in over a century. Pakistan's Meteorological Department also warned that in regions dotted with glaciers, the heat could lead to "outburst floods".

In 2013, an outburst flood

in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand led to flooding that destroyed villages and killed several thousand people. And the heat is also life-threatening in other ways.

Around half of the Indian population depends on agriculture for existence. Wheat farmers there have been saying for weeks that high temperatures are damaging their yields.

One farmer from Rajasthan told reporters that between 15 and 20 percent of his wheat crop, as well as half the cumin crop, had already been lost. In a country where millions of lives depend on fine margins, such losses will doubtless lead some people to starve.

In New Delhi this week, there has also been a rash of landfill fires that officials said were caused by spontaneous combustion. Atul Garg, the director of fire services in the city, says, "Everything is ready to burn."

There are few signs that world leaders are deciding to act.

In fact, all the warm words spoken at last year's Cop26 conference seem to have evaporated. The war in Ukraine gave them a much-needed excuse to ramp up fossil fuels.

Among the guilty stands India's hard right prime minister, Narendra Modi. He fought successfully to ensure that a pledge to end the use of coal was watered down to "phase down", rather than "phase out". It is India's poor that are now paying the price of his betrayal.

More workers set to join mass revolt in Sri Lanka

WORKERS' organisations are playing an increasing role in the revolt in Sri Lanka and could prove decisive.

Millions of workers struck for a day last week to demand the resignation of the hated Rajapaksa regime and an end to the economic crisis gripping the island.

In the capital Colombo, thousands of trade union members joined the protesters already camping in front of president Rajapaksa's office for nearly three weeks.

"Life has become hard in this economic crisis. Gas, electricity,

food and bus fares are all overpriced at the moment," a government worker, who wanted to stay anonymous, told reporters.

With five members in her family, she says she finds it hard to provide for them with her salary which has stayed the same despite a steep hike in prices of food, medicines and fuel.

"Last year, the price of rice used to be around 99 rupees—about 22 pence. It is currently at 215," she said.

Many mainstream commentators are quick to

blame the economic collapse on high levels of government borrowing.

They say that this proves that there can be no break from neoliberal economic policies without incurring a catastrophe.

But the high borrowing strategy was deliberately encouraged by international markets and bankers.

Between 2000 and 2020, they were more than happy to proclaim the strategy whilst Sri Lanka had some of the highest growth rates in the region.

Those same bankers, now backed by the International

Monetary Fund, are now demanding that working people pay for the crisis with a programme of massive austerity.

They want to see a move to "liberalise" the economy by cutting fuel and food subsidies for those who need it most.

No wonder that the unions are being pushed from below to organise more protests this week and for another, bigger general strike later this month.

Protesters must continue to take to the streets and demand the end of the Rajapaksa regime and austerity for good.

We need to start cost of living fightback

I COMPLETELY agree with the person featured in the story in last week's paper who wants to fight against the energy bosses (Socialist Worker, 27 April).

I am bloody furious at the situation we are in with the cost of living crisis.

My energy bill has more than doubled in months.

First, my provider went bust and I was transferred to British Gas. Now my bills are over £200 a month.

British Gas is muttering about "vampire devices"—the cost of leaving appliances on standby—and quoting a saving of £147 a year.

This figure is disputed but my costs have gone up £100 a month.

With increases in shopping, council tax, national insurance and inflation at a 30-year high, these vampire "savings" are irrelevant.

We can't afford to wait for the unions or the Labour Party, who seem to be red Tories at the moment.

It's a question of heat or eat so we should be getting out on the streets and doing a poll tax mark two.

We need protests that say, "Can't pay, won't pay". Capitalism doesn't have a solution to this crisis.

It only prioritises profits for the bosses and firms' shareholders.

Workers must fight for a pay rise and also give the Tories a bloody nose in elections.

Chris Atherton
Wolverhampton

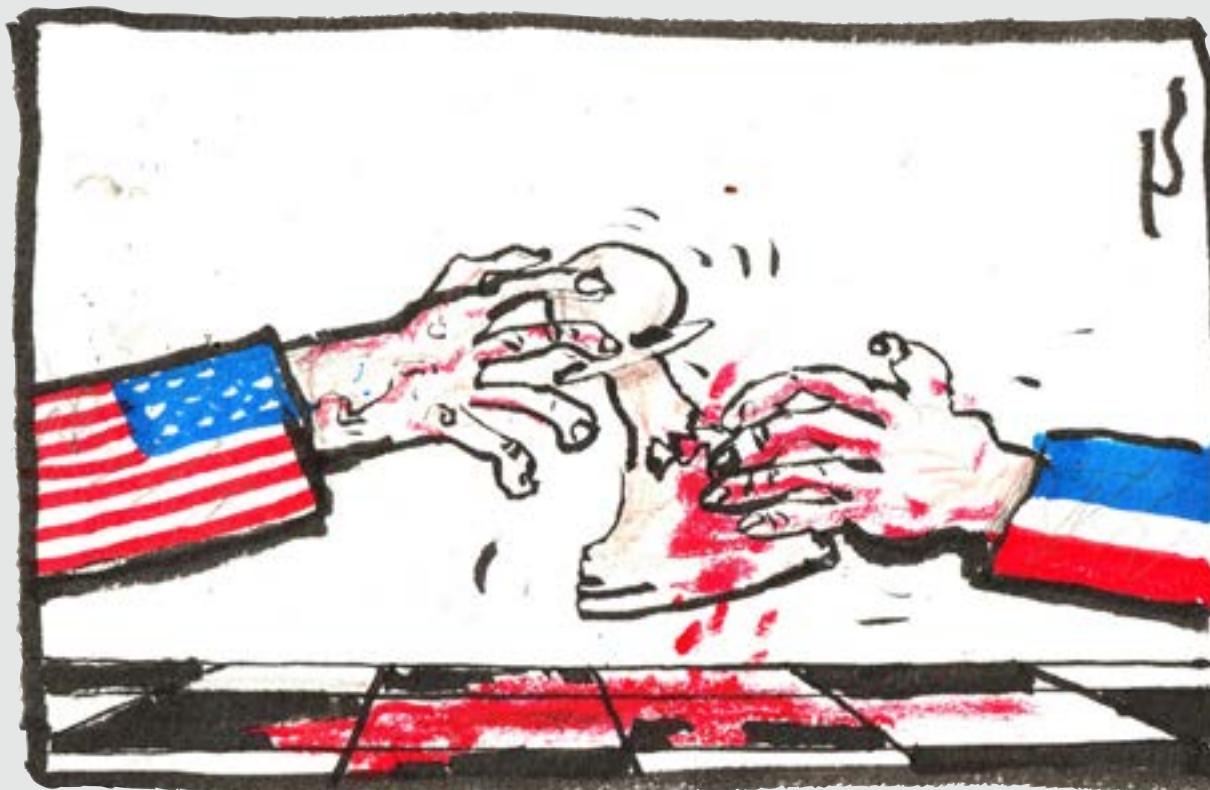


ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Le Pen shows fascism on the rise

MARINE LE Pen may have lost the French presidential election but her huge vote share shows the appetite for reactionary, racist ideas and fascism.

Le Pen will undoubtedly give confidence to the vile racists who roam our streets.

We can't give the fascists an inch, they'll take a mile.

Anti-fascism is a fight on the streets and in the ballot box.

Kevin Miles
On Facebook

Unions must act to tackle long Covid

OUTSTANDING article on Long Covid—a wave of sickness the Tories want to hide (Socialist Worker, 27 April), covering so many issues from work, to benefits, to the government.

We agree, "It's vital that our trade unions mount a serious campaign to win a better deal for those affected."

Long Covid nurses and midwives
On Twitter

Take over could benefit the bosses

Renationalising energy is a great idea.

But maybe not so much under this government that will just cream off any money into their own bank accounts.

John Long
On Facebook

The dangers of Elon Musk owning Twitter

ELON MUSK is a dangerous man. He wants to control the items we buy and services we use.

He has a particular philosophy which he claims is tied to freedom of speech and against the traditional nature of bosses.

But all billionaires—even if they have dated popular singers, have an army of masculine supporters and go to space—are dangerous.

Musk has lots of dodgy ideas, including Covid denial, and said stupid

Right to roam and equal access to the countryside

ON SUNDAY 24 April I along with friends participated in some of the organised and more spontaneous events to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the 1932 Mass Trespass of Kinder Scout.

After planting a red flag in the ground high up on the slopes of Ashop Head, Derbyshire where the young trespassers held their victory rally all those years ago, I experienced mixed emotions.

The first one was pride in the progress made thus far in the ongoing campaign for the right to roam.

The second was anger as reports emerged during the previous week that the government had quashed a review into the right to roam in England's countryside. The Tories

are defending the status quo in which legal restrictions still prevent people from walking freely across 92 percent of land.

Tory MP Mark Spencer described the countryside as a "place for business". This, alongside the new policing bill which makes trespass a criminal rather than a civil offence, will make people fear walking in places they don't know particularly well.

My last emotion of the day, however, was optimism. When returning from Hayfield to Edale we came across the event "Kinder in Colour".

It was a mass gathering of people from diverse backgrounds highlighting the issues surrounding equal access to green

space. Currently only 39 percent of people from black backgrounds live within a five minute walk of green space compared to 58 percent of white people.

It is also estimated that people from black backgrounds account for just one percent of all visits to National Parks.

This event added a new dimension to the ramblers' movement. Working in unity we have the potential to rekindle the spirit of the Mass Trespass.

Demanding equal access to the countryside while simultaneously furthering the cause for the right to roam is a fight we must continue to support.

Mick Mulcahy
Preston

Alternative provision report falls short

THE government's Green Paper on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) has been published following a long-awaited review.

Increased early intervention for children with SEND features highly in the plans. Ministers' vision is for all AP to be part of a "strong Multi Academy Trust".

The paper focuses on providing targeted support for challenging behaviour within mainstream

settings with all alternative provision being part of multi academy trusts. Apparently this approach will "transform the sector" and fix everything. Seven new free schools for AP are already approved to open in areas where new provision is most needed. Great, you may say, but there is a flaw to this.

We welcome more AP settings. But why are we building new schools when current ones are closing, or are having to reduce their staffing?

The paper's vision for AP is out of touch and does not understand the role AP has within the education system.

Leigh Seedhouse
Oxford

Arms boost risks a nuclear war

WHEN RUSSIA sees all the weapons going into Ukraine the war is going to get worse.

And if Russia opens up to a wider war and sees its soldiers getting killed by weapons from around Europe I shudder to think what will happen next.

If a nuclear war kicks off we have less than ten minutes to live.

Everyone should be fighting for peace.

George Baker
On Facebook

'WE CAN WIN UNION FIGHT,' SAYS US STARBUCKS WORKER

Workers in the US are winning the right to organise in the factories and stores of massive multinational corporations. Sophie Squire speaks to activists that are fighting for union recognition

ACROSS THE United States workers are taking on massive corporations to win the right to organise in a union.

Inspired by the victories at Amazon and Starbucks, millions are thinking about how they might unionise their workplace, and asking what a union can do.

Workers at Starbucks coffee shops are among them. By Thursday of last week the number of stores getting organised totalled over 200.

Through the Starbucks Workers United campaign, workers vote on whether to join Workers United Labour Union. This is affiliated with the second-biggest union in the US, the Service Employees International Union.

While it cannot be denied that a big union is involved, workers say this campaign is being driven from the ground up.

Many activists look to Buffalo, in the state of New York, where Starbucks workers first petitioned the National Labour Relations Board (NLRB) for a union election last August.

Morgan, who works in a Starbucks in Austin, Texas, told Socialist Worker that she didn't believe unionising was possible at first. But workers' experiences in Buffalo got her thinking differently.

"I noticed what happened in Buffalo, but I'll admit it didn't occur to me that

we should do it here," she said. "I thought that maybe Buffalo was just a particularly bad store to work in."

"Then our hours got cut. Some people had their hours cut by half. Some went from being scheduled for 20 hours to eight."

"Corporate said it was a reasonable adjustment correlating with how much profit the store earned. But it's going to harm people's livelihoods."

After going public, Morgan said managers employed tactics to make workers feel uncomfortable.

"Dress code is now being enforced more severely, especially for those that are very pro-union. We've also been told that we'll be disciplined if we're even a minute late," she said.

"The cut in our hours was the fuel that lit our fire, and we moved fast. Two other colleagues and I set up an unofficial committee."

"Then we started posting memes

"We managed to get 79 percent of workers to sign union cards in three days and filed to have a union vote

"

Starbucks boss Harold Schultz styles himself as worker-friendly but his firm is hounding union organisers

"We must fight so that we are paid enough to live on. We should be allowed to keep tips that we receive on credit cards. Another important thing that we fight for is for workers to be able to decide what is needed in their store and take the action that they deem appropriate."

"We want to elect our own leaders and fight for a real say in how our stores are run."

SEVEN STARBUCKS workers were called into work by managers while a snowstorm raged in Montgomery, Alabama in February of this year.

At fifteen-minute intervals they were all fired for trying to unionise their store. This move was later deemed illegal by the NLRB.

Beto, one of the seven who was fired, told Socialist Worker that he and others were inspired by Starbucks workers' move to unionise in Buffalo.

"We knew what we wanted after that," he said. "That was to unionise."

Nikki, who was also sacked, said workers were central to making this a reality. All we did was talk to each other. We tried to make sure everyone was on board."

"We knew the bosses would attack us, and Starbucks would try and say we were coercing people into voting."

"So to fight this, we had to make sure everyone was on the same page."

The seven workers were only sacked after declaring that their store would file for a union election.

Nikki said that bosses couldn't legally fire them for organising.

"We've bonded through trauma working at this store," she said. "These guys are my family, which

they gave for firing me was that I'd ask a colleague if they wanted me to clock in early when I first entered the store every morning," she said.

Beto added that one of the reasons for firing him was that he "didn't wear a mask in non-working hours."

Nikki pointed out that they suspended those known as the Montgomery Seven because they worked so well together.

He added, "The bosses will do absolutely everything to strip us of our dignity. But we will keep fighting back, for Starbucks workers and everyone."

made our union campaign so strong."

And Beto added that Starbucks' attack on them had "backfired".

"Starbucks head office tried to make us an example of what happens when you unionise. But really it's had the opposite effect of what they wanted. It's inspired many more stores to unionise and fight back."

The company said the way union supporters had interrupted mandatory anti-union meetings "intentionally created hostile confrontations" that limited Amazon's right to communicate with staff.

The company also said the union

Lessons from the battle to unionise Amazon warehouses

THOUSANDS CHEERED when Chris Smalls, the founder of the Amazon Labour Union (ALU), announced that 8,300 workers at the JFK8 warehouse in Staten Island, New York, had won their unionisation ballot last month.

Small proclaimed, "A revolution is here. We're going to organise buildings all over the nation."

"In the last 72 hours we've been contacted by workers all over the world. They want to unionise and we're going to absolutely help them."

The news was a beacon of hope that workers everywhere could stand up to this corporate giant.

It inspired the nearly 1,500 workers in the nearby LDJ5 Amazon sorting centre to vote on whether to join the ALU. The result of the ballot will be out soon.

Amazon bosses are terrified that workers dare to unionise. They are employing dirty and intimidating tactics to undermine the organisation.

Pascuale Cioffi, a process assistant at the JFK8 fulfilment factory, described how managers would be "grabbing people and taking them to the office."

He added that they would sit them in a room with lawyers and human resources reps to ask whether they were coerced into union support.

And workers at another warehouse have received threatening letters from Amazon that asked workers to vote no and attacked the union for asking its members to pay dues. The workers at JFK8 have triumphed, but the battle to organise Amazon workers won't be easy.

Alabama
An attempt by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (Rwdsu) to unionise a warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, failed just last year.

The No vote led by 993 to 875, but the NLRB ordered a re-vote due to public pressure on Amazon. With some votes still contested, the official result of this round of voting is unclear.

But the union is likely to lose again by around 118 votes, according to the Rwdsu.

So why have workers in New York triumphed, while workers in Alabama

still can't get over the threshold?

The successful drive to unionise at the JFK8 centre was driven from the bottom up by workers. It relied on worker activists inside the building, and some of them were also political activists.

In contrast, the Rwdsu took a different, more traditional trade union approach that relied on union full-timers to build a yes vote from outside.

All the decisions made during the campaign were driven by full-time union officials, who did not experience the same hardship that workers did inside. This ended in defeat.

What's clear is that worker-led campaigns to unionise Amazon are a must, but organising within this industry giant won't be simple.

Bullying bosses, lousy pay and awful conditions mean that Amazon has a high staff turnover.

US data company, Payscale found that the average tenure of an Amazon worker is only a year.

Amazon bosses hope this will lead to a constant turnover of staff that won't stay long enough to build union links.

This means that building union membership at Amazon isn't enough. Workers must push for strikes and action to win better pay, conditions and dignity.

The union has to be an instrument for struggle and improvements in workers' lives.

The Amazon bosses are playing dirty but they can still be beaten

ONE SIGN of how Amazon will try to hit back is that it has formally objected to the vote to unionise at Staten Island.

Ludicrously it complained to the National Labor Relations Board

because the vote had been conducted

in a way that favoured the union.

Amazon argued, in one instance, that when the union offered workers marijuana, it amounted to an "impermissible grant of support" for workers' votes.

The company has refused to recognise the union. But it can be beaten. Nearly 20 years ago, the workers at a Walmart store in Quebec voted to unionise, and within six months the company shut the store down. But Amazon simply cannot shut its large warehouses.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions. To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party meetings

After the French election Is fascism back?

BRADFORD

Thu 12 May, 7pm

885-9187-7552

HUDDERSFIELD

Wed 11 May, 6.30pm

290-168-1804

LIVERPOOL

Wed 11 May, 7pm

Friends Meeting House, 22 School Ln, L1 3BT

892-8966-5179

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

Somerstown Community Centre,

Winston Churchill Ave, P05 4JJ

488-934-2809

ABERDEEN

From the First World War to Vietnam—how people power ended war

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

894-2628-7708

BIRMINGHAM

In an era of crisis—how do we stop the growth of the far right?

Wed 11 May, 7pm

The Warehouse,

54-57 Allison St, B5 5TH

281-634-5938

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

Why capitalism causes war

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

914-9548-1031

BOURNEMOUTH

System change not climate change

Thu 12 May, 7.30pm

16 Wharncliffe Rd,

Boscombe, BH5 1AH

895-2934-4614

CAMBRIDGE

Can Marx's ideas explain the global crisis?

Thu 12 May, 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House,

12 Jesus Ln, CB5 8BA

681-800-4408

EDINBURGH

Marxism, the Russian Revolution and national liberation

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House,

7 Victoria Terrace,

EH1 2JL

868-9106-9359

HARLOW

The revolutionary ideas of Rosa Luxemburg

Thu 12 May,

7.30pm

832-8746-7480

HASTINGS

Exposing the Rwanda plan

Thu 12 May, 7pm

850-8432-9959

CHESTERFIELD

Can nuclear power fix climate change?

Thu 12 May, 7pm

Assembly Rooms,

13/14 Chesterfield Rd,

S40 1AR

828-532-8731

KENT

Why nuclear power is not the answer

Thu 12 May, 8.15pm

434-623-8064

LEEDS

Is Marxism Eurocentric?

Thu 12 May, 7pm

Swarthmore Education Centre,

2-7 Woodhouse Square,

LS3 1AD

881-4770-0676

LONDON:HACKNEY

The shadow of Stalin

Thu 12 May, 7.30pm

Halkevi Community Centre,

31-33 Dalston Lane,

E8 3DF

854-8245-8715

LONDON:HARINGEY

From No 10 to Buckingham Palace—corruption in Britain

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

4593-881-576

LONDON:NEWHAM

Ending apartheid in Palestine—the case for a revolutionary strategy

Wed 11 May, 7pm

Stratford Advice Arcade,

107-109 The Grove, E15 1HP

288-098-8827

LONDON:SOUTH EAST

Is revolution possible in the 21st century?

Thu 12 May, 7pm

Deptford Lounge,

9 Giffin St, SE8 4RJ

529-913-6390

LONDON:TOWER HAMLETS

Socialists and the May elections

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

818-391-0420

LONDON:WALTHAM FOREST

Why are prices rising—how can we make the bosses pay?

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

William Morris Community

Centre, Greenleaf Rd,

E17 6QQ

543-023-057

LONDON:WEST & NORTHWEST

From the First World War to Vietnam—how people power ended war

Thu 12 May, 7.30pm

892-8966-5179

MANCHESTER

Dear England? Progressive patriotism and nationalism in sport

Wed 11 May, 7pm

Friends' Meeting House,

6 Mount St, M2 5NS

323-178-7151

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND

From the First World War to Vietnam—how people power ended war

Wed 11 May, 7.30pm

894-2628-7708

WIGAN

Why nuclear power is not the answer

Thu 12 May,

7pm

The Old Courts,

Gerrard Winstanley House,

Crawford St,

WN1 1NA

894-2628-7708

YORK & SCARBOROUGH

Patterns of revolution—what can we learn from Sudan?

Wed 11 May,

7.30pm

827-489-7492

The Socialist Workers Party continues to hold mostly online meetings during the pandemic. This ensures that there can still be collective and safe discussion, organising and actions. Occasionally branches will hold in-person meetings with precautions taken for a safe environment.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop

**The Labour Party—
a Marxist History**
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein
and Charlie Kimber, £14.99

<img alt="Cover of 'Breaking Up the British State—Scotland

Distressing but essential film shows truth of police violence

The little known but true story of *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain* is a close-quarters look at how cops become racist murderers, writes **Milan Perera**

FRANKIE FAISON, who plays the title role in *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain*, hadn't heard of this true story before he read the script.

So commonplace are police killings of black people in the US, that news of Chamberlain's killing in New York didn't reach Faison in nearby New Jersey.

But the story—now dramatised by independent film maker David Midell—has fresh significance in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Kenneth Chamberlain Sr, a 68 year old veteran accidentally set off his medical alert around 5.30am. The responders sent police to Chamberlain's room. By 7am he was dead.

After he refused to let police into his flat, they broke his door down, tasered him, then finally shot and killed him.

The runtime of the movie is roughly the same as the real-time sequence of events outside Chamberlain's door.

This makes *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain* all the more harrowing.

Unbearable

The slick cinematography and the incidental music heighten the drama to an unbearable pitch.

Probing, claustrophobic, camera angles couple with the cops' loud pounding on the door and their racially-charged obscenities makes it uneasy viewing.

But Midell had the artistic conviction not to sanitise the heart wrenching murder of an innocent person who just wanted to be left alone.

Faison's portrayal of Chamberlain as someone with post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder is also exceptional.

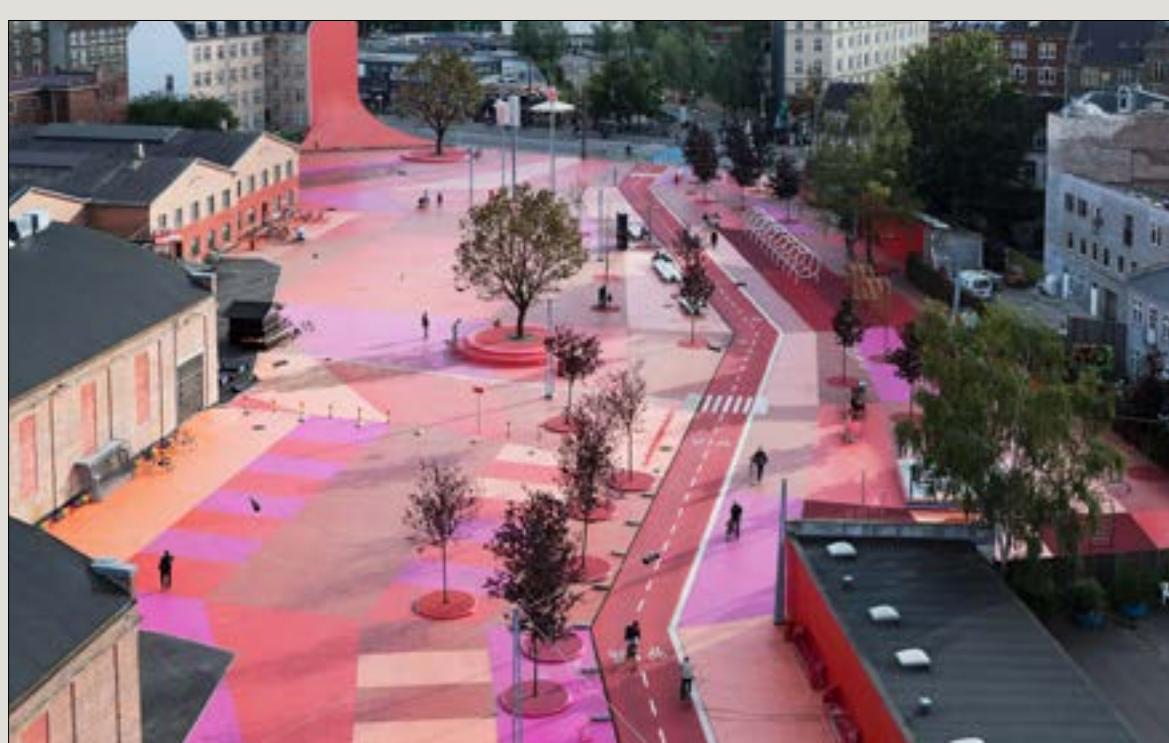
The danger in portraying someone with a history of mental distress is to overplay it, and then reduce the character to a caricature. But Faison pulls it off.

He captures Chamberlain's agitated state of mind of the black veteran, shaking like a leaf as his breathing becomes laboured.

The *Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain* is so strong that, after watching a screening, actor Morgan Freeman got on board as an executive producer.

It is compulsory viewing to shed a fresh light on racial injustice and police brutality.

The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain is available on digital platforms from Monday 9 May



'THE IDEAL City'—Our Time on Earth looks at possibilities for sustainable societies

'Radical visions for the future of all'

EXHIBITION

OUR TIME ON EARTH

From Thu 5 May—29 August at The Curve, the Barbican Centre, London, EC2Y 8HD. Tickets from £13. Go to barbican.org.uk

THE BARBICAN presents Our Time on Earth—a major exhibition celebrating the power of global creativity to transform

the conversation around the climate emergency.

Through art, design, science, music and philosophy, the exhibition presents a range of radical visions for the future of all species.

The Barbican says the exhibition is a journey through immersive, interactive installations and digital works. It explores different ways of

existing on Earth and finding ways to reconnect with them.

And it looks at the role technology has to play in deepening our understanding and connection to the natural world.

The Barbican adds that Our Time on Earth "opens a conversation to look at the positive possibilities of an alternative future."

Exposing the multinational behind a toxic scandal

FILM

ARICA

In cinemas from Fri 6 May. Go to aricafilm.com

AFTER THE Swedish mining company Boliden dumped 20,000 tonnes of toxic waste in the Chilean desert town of Arica, thousands of its citizens became sick.

Many died from cancer.

Arica plunges us into the ground-breaking corporate accountability trial which began after Lars Edman—born in Chile

and raised in Boliden, birthplace of the company—exposed the scandal.

Alongside his co-director William Johansson Kalen, Arica picks up the story they first began in *Toxic Playground* in 2010. That exposed how decisions made decades ago in Europe continue to affect people in South America.

Arica is part personal journey, part courtroom drama.

It's also an extremely timely story about an afflicted community fighting for environmental justice against a multinational.



Whistleblower Lars Edman

RADIO

GRENADA, CONFRONTING THE PAST

BBC World Service, Tue 10 May, 2:32am and then on BBC Sounds

BBC JOURNALIST Laura Trevelyan explores her family's connection to the slave trade on the Caribbean island of Grenada.

Back in the eighteenth century, the Trevelyan family were absentee slave owners on Grenada.

Only after the University College London database of slave ownership in the British Caribbean was published in 2013 did Laura discover her family's slave owning past.

When slavery was abolished in 1834, the British government paid compensation to slave owners, because they had lost their "property".

The Trevelyan family received the equivalent of £3 million in compensation in today's money—the enslaved received nothing.

Laura and her producer Koralie Barrau—who is descended from slaves on the Caribbean island of Haiti—go to Grenada to learn more about the legacy of slavery.

RADIO

MEXICO: THE YAQUI FIGHT BACK

BBC World Service, Thu 5 May, 2:32am and then on BBC Sounds

THIS IS A story of Resistance and division among Mexico's indigenous Yaqui people.

Anabela Carlon is a legal advocate for the indigenous Yaqui of Sonora—a fierce defender of her people's land. She is no stranger to the immense dangers that face her in northern Mexico.

In 2016, she and her husband were kidnapped at gunpoint by masked men. And now one of her biggest cases is representing the families of ten men from her locality who disappeared last year.

In Mexico, the Yaqui of Sonora are known as "the undefeated".

In spite of being hunted, enslaved and exiled, they are the only indigenous group never to have surrendered to Spanish colonial forces or the Mexican government.

Somehow, eight communities survived along the River Yaqui. But there are deep divisions, most of all, over whether a gas pipeline should be allowed on their land.

Anabela is adamant it will not happen.

Parliament is a putrid cesspit of sexism. It's never been clearer than last week, when an unnamed Tory MP directed a barrage of sexist abuse at Labour MP Angela Rayner.

Quoted in the Mail on Sunday newspaper, he accused her of crossing and uncrossing her legs to distract Boris Johnson during Prime Minister's Questions.

This prompted a slew of revelations about the toxic atmosphere of Westminster.

One Tory MP had watched porn on his phone while sat near women in the Commons. Despite being reported to the whip, no action has yet been taken.

And it's not just the Tories. One shadow cabinet member told a Labour MP she was a "secret weapon" because "women want to be her friend and men want to **** her". It's not hard to imagine what the atmosphere for other women working in parliament, such as catering staff, cleaners and secretaries, must feel like.

It's a good sign that people have rushed to condemn the filth thrown at Rayner. Decades of campaigning over women's rights in the workplace has created a public atmosphere that makes it harder to defend such abuse.

Also, it shows how no woman, no matter how important her job, is able to completely escape sexist vitriol.

Even in the highest echelons of British society sexism cannot be escaped. In fact, where the ruling class roams is where it is most rampant.

SEXISM IN parliament is also served up with a side dish of class snobbery. Women are still a minority in the voting chamber, representing only 34 percent.

And while some MPs come from a working class background, parliament disproportionately drawn from the elite. A survey in 2019 revealed that 29 percent of MPs went to private school—compared to just 7 percent across Britain as a whole.

But it also shows how every instance of women's oppression is experienced through the prism of class.

Women higher up in society have access to resources that they wouldn't as part of the working class.

And those with a huge public profile, while more likely to be targeted, are given a degree of protection and power.

Quite rightly, Rayner has been able to sit on the This Morning sofa and defend herself. It's good she's coming out swinging and blasted the Mail for even printing the



WORKING CLASS women are less protected from sexism in society

HOW DOES CLASS AFFECT SEXISM?

Sexism is built into the system and hits women from all classes. But it's working class women who feel the sharpest edge, explains Sarah Bates

story. But that's not an opportunity afforded the 30 percent of women who say they've experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

When faced with the sharpest end of oppression, rich women have options to shape their experience in a way that working class women simply don't.

They can take taxis instead of a night bus, leave jobs where they're being harassed or afford to escape an abusive

It's not so much the 'glass ceiling' as the 'sticky floor' of low pay for most

Angela Rayner

very real horrors that even the richest women experience.

And as well as pinpointing these differences, revolutionary socialists approach this question as one of unflinching opposition to every instance of women's oppression.

Sometimes that means defending our class enemies.

We fight for everybody, even those we politically disagree with on every other question, to live in a world free from all oppression.

That's why Socialist Worker wouldn't print headlines calling Margaret Thatcher a sexist slur, or why we didn't focus on what clothes Theresa May wore.

BEING A socialist is about more than fighting on issues around exploitation, such as workers battling for better pay or improved conditions at work.

It's also about challenging racism, sexism, homophobia and all oppression that is built into the system and causes misery on such a large scale.

Challenging oppression has been a feature of every major explosion of working class action. For revolutionaries, this isn't accidental.

Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin argued that the model for revolutionaries "should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects".

Alongside this principled opposition to women's oppression, fighting divisive ideas actually strengthens the working class as a whole.

Oppression is driven from the top of society and pushed down relentlessly into the working class. That's one reason why parliament, the place where our rulers congregate and organise, is riddled with physical manifestations of oppression.

Sexism under capitalism doesn't benefit working class men any more than working class women.

FWOMEN are paid less than men in a workplace, neither group of workers gets the extra cash—it's the bosses who pocket it. It's of no benefit to working class men when abortion rights are cut or funding for women's healthcare is threatened.

But it's helpful to politicians meteing out Tory austerity or relentlessly pushing the ideals of "family values". They do this because the bosses' system relies so heavily on the unpaid labour of working class women.

Oppression creates very real pain and suffering for individuals. Family values are an expression of the importance of the reproductive unit of the nuclear family to the ruling class. By looking at the division between

classes, it's possible to point to how sexism is of a material benefit to everyone in the ruling class—men and women.

Although individuals within that class, such as Thatcher or May, are subject to sexism, they directly benefit from the class system affording them their position within society.

And there are countless examples of right wing women using their position to attack working class women.

Top Tory Amber Rudd was home secretary when her department slashed funding for domestic violence survivors. Cabinet minister Nadine Dorries has spent her political career attacking Muslim women, attempting to slash abortion rights and bring in legislation that promotes abstinence-based sex education.

Some go even further. In 2021, Metropolitan Police boss Cressida Dick and home secretary Priti Patel colluded to smash a vigil for Sarah Everard, murdered by cop Wayne Couzens.

Class interests overpowered any sort of kinship Patel or Dick might have felt with those campaigning against violence against women.

So, it's not simply that women experience oppression differently under capitalism. Looking below the surface level, some of them have a class interest in maintaining that society.

RUSSIAN revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai wrote extensively about how understanding class was fundamental to challenging women's oppression.

Women in the February 1917 Russian Revolution fought a system of sexism and class rule (top) Violence at the Sarah Everard vigil was sanctioned by ruling class women (above)

class, which gives a specific class colouring to the targets and tasks it sets itself."

It's as true today as it was a hundred years ago that working class women live a wildly different experience to their rich counterparts, despite both being oppressed.

Most women are not hitting their heads against the "glass ceiling" that stops them ascending to the top of social, cultural and political life. Instead, they are trapped on the "sticky floor" of low paid work and domestic drudgery.

Sticky floor or glass ceiling, never has it felt more urgent to throw ourselves into the common fight against sexism.

But it's when uniting as a class for a new kind of society that the rotten system endlessly spewing oppression can be done away with.

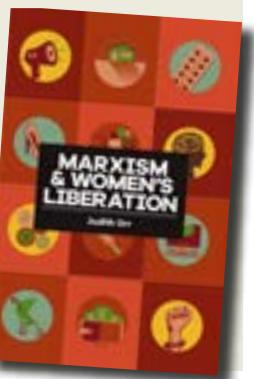
READ MORE

● **Marxism and Women's Liberation**
by Judith Orr
£9.99

● **Alexandra Kollontai: Writings From The Struggle**
by Cathy Porter
£12

● **How can we end this sexist system?**
by Sadie Robinson
bit.ly/SexistSystem

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



FOCUS ON FASCISM

Why is fascism different to the usual right wing rule?

As racists and fascists such as Marine Le Pen make huge gains in elections, Isabel Ringrose examines what fascism is and how it spreads

ACROSS THE world there are growing movements described as fascist. To understand the dynamic of Marine Le Pen in France or Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, it's important to look at the nature of fascism.

Capitalist governments of all sorts are capable of viciously authoritarian rule, harsh laws and widespread attacks on rights.

But fascism is not simply extreme racism or state control, or a way to describe detestable people.

It obliterates democratic working class organisations of all types.

Even the most moderate union leader is banned and potentially murdered. And any independent form of democratic organisation outside fascism's control faces repression.

Warned

Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky warned of Adolf Hitler's seizure of control that, "should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank".

Fascists use elections as a method to spread their message, but this is subordinate to their real aim.

They do not seek simply to assemble a majority in parliament but to do away with such methods of rule.

In "normal" times, the ruling class uses a balance of co-option and concessions to front its rule. There are elections, guaranteed liberties, and space for trade unions and political parties to put forward their views.

But in times of extreme crisis, these methods aren't guaranteed to succeed.

Important sections of the political ruling class and big business can move to gamble on the use of fascist terror. But fascism isn't just

a weapon plucked from the armoury of the ruling class. It is itself, in its developed state, a mass movement.

It begins among the "petty bourgeoisie"—small business people, the self-employed and similar layers.

At times of deep crisis, this layer is crushed by economic collapse but doesn't have either the power of the capitalists or the potential collective strength of workers.

Trotsky wrote in his pamphlet, Fascism—What It Is and How to Fight It—that "fascism unites and arms the scattered masses".

Trotsky described the petty bourgeoisie as "human dust", to whom fascism offers a home and a movement.

And, once established, it then draws in the most demoralised and atomised sections of the working class as well as the support of some capitalists.

Fascism then seeks to display its usefulness to big business by combating the left in the streets and assaulting strikers. It also often reaches out to workers

by putting forward a fake "revolutionary" critique of the ruling class, who it denounces as unpatriotic and weak.

It builds through tapping into anger by using fake "anti-establishment" rhetoric.

It's not just the failures of the system that sees fascism rise.

Movement

The Russian Revolution in 1917 saw workers take power during a huge social crisis because there was a strong revolutionary left to carry the movement forwards.

It meant those looking to tear free from rulers in society could go left.

Yet without a strong revolutionary party or movement, people can be pulled rightwards, as was the case in Germany.

German revolutionary Clara Zetkin underlined that the success of fascism was a political defeat.

It was the failure of the left to offer a more powerful alternative.

She wrote in 1923 that "fascism arrives much more as punishment because the proletariat has not carried and driven forward the revolution that began in Russia."

Social upheaval and the threat of revolution gives rise to fascist forces as the ruling class scramble to cling to power.

It's also the tragic result of the working class's inability to put forward its own interests. This is the first in a three-part series on fascism

Tories have blood on hands for care home deaths

by YURI PRASAD

THE TORIES' failure to protect elderly and vulnerable people in care homes as Covid raged is one of the biggest scandals of the pandemic. Now, after last week's judicial review finding, we know it was also illegal.

Some 25,000 people were discharged from hospitals into care homes when infection rates were at their highest, in March and April 2020.

Most were untested for Covid, but according to freedom of information requests by Sky News, approximately one in ten were positive. No matter their status, patients were sent from the hospital under instructions from the department of health.

It was a recipe for disaster. Covid spread through care homes with ease, especially among people who were most prone to serious illness.

The process was sped up by the inability to supply staff with adequate protective equipment.

Care home staff generally had less access to vital

AN ELDERLY Covid patient in a care home

masks and gowns than even the struggling NHS. And they often had little or no sick pay to enable them to isolate themselves if necessary.

By 17 April there had been almost 10,000 excess deaths in care homes since the beginning of March.

Yet the then health secretary Matt Hancock would say later that the government had thrown a "protective ring of

steel" around the care sector. As the scale of the disaster became clear that summer, Boris Johnson said it was all the fault of the care homes themselves.

"We discovered too many care homes didn't really follow the procedures in the way they should have," he said.

It was a kick in the teeth for all those who worked tirelessly

during the pandemic. They often formed deep bonds with those they looked after but subsequently had to watch die.

The scandal goes deeper than just the hospital discharge of infectious and potentially infectious people.

As Covid spread through care homes, managers found it impossible to have residents desperately ill with the

virus transferred back to hospital. Some NHS call takers were instructed not to admit patients from care homes, and at least one ambulance crew confirmed the story to the Sunday Times newspaper.

David Crabtree owns two care homes in Yorkshire, in which many people died without being taken to hospital after he was forced to accept a patient discharged with Covid.

When that patient got seriously ill, Crabtree says, "We were told there was a restriction on beds and to treat as 'end of life'."

Residents

A further seven residents died after contracting Covid as a result. None were admitted to hospital.

A source at the department of health told the Sunday Times that care home residents were being treated as "collateral damage".

They described the non-admittance to hospital strategy as "mass murder".

Matt Hancock today says that the blame does not lie with him but with the now-disbanded Public Health

England organisation.

The ex-health secretary says they failed to tell him that Covid could be transmitted asymptotically, and that had he known this, the policy would have been different.

But many bodies were at the time warning of the possibility of asymptomatic infection, including the government's own Sage committee.

That's probably why the high court decided against him. It said the government's policies were unlawful because they failed to take into account the risk to vulnerable people of asymptomatic infection.

As far as the Tories are concerned, old and disabled people are expendable. Not part of their money-making scheme, right wingers classify them as a "cost" rather than a "contributor".

The years in which care home residents may have toiled count for nothing, nor the richness they bring to the lives of friends and family.

When it comes to Tory values, life only has meaning if it has the potential for profit.

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War in Ukraine increases grip of imperialist blocs

Conflict is pushing states to sort themselves into opposing strategic groups. Nick Clark investigates how the Ukraine war is reshaping the world

 **THE WAR in Ukraine is making the whole world a more polarised and dangerous place.**

The longer it goes on, the more it becomes a clash of major global powers, between which smaller countries have to choose.

The process is pushing states into two solidifying rival blocs. And they're arming themselves to the teeth.

British foreign secretary Liz Truss said this openly in a major speech last week outlining her strategy for the West.

She celebrated the fact that allies of the US had united to send arms to Ukraine and force sanctions on Russia. Tellingly, she all but admitted that this effectively means Britain is already at war.

"The war in Ukraine is our war," said Truss.

Truss added she wants this new "tough approach" from the West to extend "to the threats that are emerging beyond Ukraine"—Russia and China.

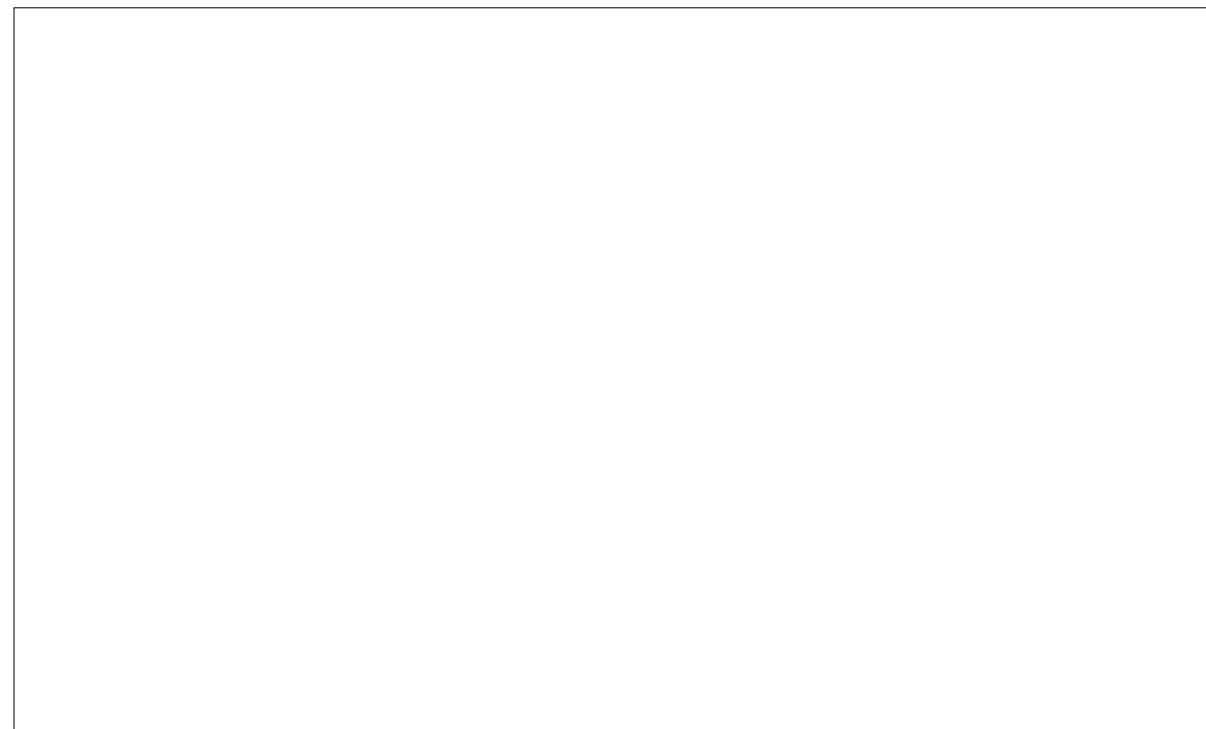
In other words, she wants the West on a permanent war footing.

This of course means strengthening the US's military alliance Nato in eastern Europe, and increases the flow of weapons into the region. But she also wants Nato to operate in the Indo-Pacific—in direct challenge to China.

Doing this means building a "network of strong partnerships" involving countries outside of Nato to prop up and project Western military power.

That process has already begun.

More than 40 countries joined a US-convened meeting of defence ministers at its Ramstein airbase in Germany last week.



REPRESENTATIVES FROM 40 countries met at the Ramstein US airbase in Germany last week

US defence secretary Lloyd Austin repeated at the meeting what he'd said just days before—that his aim in Ukraine is to weaken Russia.

This process has the effect of solidifying a growing rival bloc behind the US's main enemy, China.

Even before the war began, US president Joe Biden pushed for Western governments to side with him as he ramped up arms spending against China.

He also even met Russian president Vladimir Putin as recently as June last year. It was a bid to

draw him closer to the US, and slow down growing ties between China and Russia.

But now the war has pushed the two closer together on the basis that they share a common rival in the US. It's a relationship that China says has "no limits". And China's refusal to condemn Russia along with the West is pushing it and the European Union—which it looks to for trade—apart.

On the other hand, Western governments are trying desperately to win over India, which also relies

on trade with Russia and refused to condemn the invasion. They fear a three-way relationship between China, Russia and India.

So the US has promised India military support to play on its rivalry with China.

For people like Truss, this is all fits in to the plan. The war in Ukraine for those at the top an opportunity to rebuild a world where the West and its allies are "assertive and in the ascendant."

For ordinary people it should be terrifying.

States spending billions more on weapons across the globe

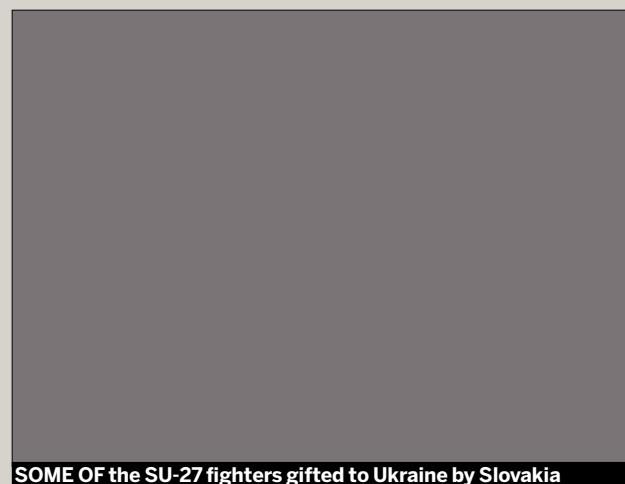
 **EVEN BEFORE the war, the looming clash between the US and China was driving up military spending.**

Data published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) last week revealed that global arms spending reached an all-time high in 2021 at \$2 trillion (£1,600 billion). It said this was a real-terms rise of 6 percent.

The US's military spending, it said, had actually fallen slightly since the year before.

But it had thrown more money—an increase of 24 percent—on researching new weapons. This is because "The US government has repeatedly stressed the need to preserve the US military's technological edge over strategic competitors."

Eight European Nato countries hit the alliance's defence spending target of 2 percent. This is one less than last year, but two more than in 2014. Sipri researcher Diego Lopes da Silva said he expected



SOME OF the SU-27 fighters gifted to Ukraine by Slovakia

European arms spending to continue growing.

Ukraine's military spending has increased by 72 percent since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

Russia increased its military spending by nearly 3 percent since 2020 to £52 billion.

And China—the world's second largest arms spender—increased arms spending to £233 billion, up 4.7 percent. The West's allies in the Pacific, Japan and Australia, raised arms spending by 7 and 4 percent respectively.

Germany now sends in tanks

 BEFORE the invasion, attitudes among some European Union countries towards Russia weren't always totally aligned with the US's. Germany in particular ruled out sending weapons to Ukraine, and warned against economic sanctions.

This wasn't out of any commitment to peace. It was because Germany's ruling class wanted to avoid anything that would hurt its economic interest. It especially wanted to keep Russian energy exports to Europe flowing, and get the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany up and running.

But after the war killed the pipeline deal, and Western sanctions sought to close off Russian gas exports, Germany has fallen increasingly in behind the US.

So having begun the war reluctant to arm Ukraine, Germany's defence minister told the Ramstein conference of plans to send Gepard anti-aircraft tanks.

Israel offers new arms help

 ISRAEL began the war posing as an intermediary between Ukraine and Russia, mostly because it wants Russia to keep looking the other way whenever it bombs Syria.

But with its entire economy and political system tied to the needs of US imperialism, Israel has also been pulled into line. So a week before the Ramstein meeting its president Benny Gantz announced that Israel too would begin sending military aid to Ukraine.

Out of decades of US military aid, Israel has built a high-tech weapons industry that it now exports back to the West.

A top Israeli military source told the Al-Monitor news website Israel has become "a real pilgrimage" for foreign security officials since the war began.

IN BRIEF**Bosses target union rep after solidarity**

BOSSES HAVE suspended a Unite union rep employed by Altrad Services at Fawley Exxon refinery in Southampton. It comes after 50 of his colleagues who are not striking refused to cross a picket line.

Some 100 strikers make up a third of the workforce. Others voted not to cross the picket line with the proviso that safety critical staff would remain on site.

Steaming ahead with new ballot

STRIKES AT the GE Steam turbine factory in Rugby are set to escalate. The Unite union is balloting the 75 strikers to extend their strike over pay.

Bosses at GE Steam power and Shape have refused to negotiate over pay and workers taking on new roles.

Wiltshire wardens plan protest

TRAFFIC WARDENS at Wiltshire council were set to strike on Saturday to demand the council stops cutting pay for staff working unsocial hours.

The members of the GMB union have planned a protest and a march that will begin at 1pm outside Salisbury Library on Saturday.

Berkshire hospital fight ends in deal

SECURITY STAFF at the Royal Berkshire Hospital have agreed a deal. The 20 guards started striking in December 2020 against their outsourced employer Kingdom Services Group Ltd over pay rates.

The one-year deal from December 2021 includes a 7.5 percent pay rise and back pay to that date worth £400.

Threat delivers improved pay

STRIKES BY delivery workers employed by DHL have been called off.

The Unite union members have accepted an offer that secures a pay increase of between 10.68 percent and 15.64 percent.

Boycott Wingstop until bosses stop

DELIVERY workers are boycotting fast food restaurant Wingstop in north London due to the way they are treated.

The riders held a protest outside the restaurant on Friday to hit back at the practices of the restaurant.

Workers are barred from using toilets inside the building and made to wait outside for food pick-ups. The restaurant also constantly threatens to report riders to delivery apps.

The boycott caused orders to pile up.

UNIVERSITIES

STRIKERS AT Staffordshire university last month

UCU members resist leaders' delay tactics

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

UNIVERSITY workers last week hit back at plans by their UCU union leaders to de-escalate and delay their dispute.

They thwarted an effort by general secretary Jo Grady and her supporters to make it impossible to take effective action this academic year.

As part of the long-running dispute, branch delegates voted for a marking and assessment boycott backed by further strikes. They did this at the recent special higher education sector conference (Shesc) that discussed the four fights dispute—over pay, workload, contracts and equalities.

This directly confronted Grady's attempt to shut down the action and postpone any fightback for at least a year.

But, despite the democratic verdict from the union's members, the attempts to squash action continued.

Grady's first instinct was to delay a meeting to confirm the dates of boycott and strikes. That would have meant the

boycott would start too late to hit universities this year.

Bee Hughes, a UCU activist in Liverpool, told Socialist Worker, "We were alarmed when we received an email from Grady saying that the date of the next higher education committee (HEC) would be 12 May. It needed to be sooner."

"Branches need clarification about how to proceed, especially as their marking period has already started or is fast approaching for many branches."

Activists were outraged and bombarded the union with demands to launch the action immediately. Many pointed out that it didn't need an HEC to do so anyway.

Under pressure the union caved in and rushed out an email on Wednesday evening to HEC members.

Referencing what it said was a "misunderstanding", Jon Hegarty, the union's head of bargaining, had a new message. "We will ask the HE officers to use their delegated powers to authorise a boycott to begin as soon as possible," the email said.

So, no need for an HEC to do this. Bee says, "The pressure from members on those at the top of the union is working. Even though I half expect those at the top to say it was their plan all along."

But union leaders' attempts to delay the dispute didn't stop there. In another email they said that the notice could not be sent out until the results of the USS Shesc were confirmed.

The UCU Left group, which Socialist Worker supports, said action needs to start now. In an email it wrote, "The sooner we get on with the marking sanction the more effective it will be."

"We cannot wait until most of the marking has been completed. The time for a marking sanction to be effective is now."

From last winter onwards, Grady has moved only when facing massive pressure from below. She has repeatedly tried to head off escalation.

After this experience, many activists are asking whether they can take things forward effectively under the current general secretary.

DUNDEE

Low paid pensions fightback rages on

HUNDREDS OF workers at Dundee university are vowing to continue their battle against pension cuts.

Unison union members started their third week of strikes this week, and plan to finish on Sunday of next week.

Low paid workers at the university are fighting the closure of their pension scheme. It's a move by university management which would set them back thousands of pounds every year in retirement.

Bosses also want workers

to stay in employment until they are 68 years old, and to close the pension scheme to new claimants.

Trade union branches should rush donations and messages of solidarity to strikers in Dundee.

If the fat cat bosses can get away with it at this university, they will try elsewhere.

Send messages of support to Phil Welsh Dundee Unison secretary p.welsh@dundee.ac.uk and Mo (Maureen) Dickinson Unison Scotland official M.Dickson@unison.co.uk

TRANSPORT

Battles on the buses in Glasgow and south London

BUS WORKERS employed by First Glasgow were set to strike for two days from Wednesday of this week.

The dispute concerns a two-year pay deal which would take some workers to £9.48 an hour backdated to August 2021 to April 2022.

That's two pence below the adult minimum wage from April 2022 of £9.50 per hour.

The money is there to give these workers a substantial pay rise.

According to the latest annual reports, the First Glasgow companies involved in the dispute returned a £12.6 million profit.

The 60 bus cleaners and shunters plan

another walkout on Wednesday 18 May.

● AROUND 1,000 bus drivers employed by Arriva in south London will take to picket lines after rejecting a three percent pay offer.

The workers in the Unite union are fighting against service reductions that have reduced their earnings.

They are set to strike at garages in Brixton, Croydon, Norwood and Thornton Heath causing travel chaos across south and central London.

The strikes are set to kick off on Wednesday of next week, followed by a 48-hour strike from Monday 16 May. This follows a 48-hour strike in April.

RAIL

Solidarity on the picket line in Hastings

Churchill cleaners strike again over poverty pay

HUNDREDS OF rail cleaners across London and the south east have begun a fresh wave of strikes in their fight for higher pay and conditions.

The RMT union members started 11 days of strikes from Wednesday of last week to demand Churchill pays up. The outsourcer—which made a £39 million profit last year—runs cleaning services on the GTR, Eurostar, SE trains and HS1 train operating companies.

Bella, a cleaner and RMT rep in Hastings, told Socialist Worker, "Churchill are absolutely unscrupulous, they exploit all their workers on the rail contracts and others by attacking our terms and conditions."

"I believe the whole railway should be publicly owned. It should never have been privatised because the health and safety risks and attacks on workers can't go on."

The strikers have received huge amounts of support and have built lively picket lines. Some 400 people heard from

the strikers and their supporters at an online rally.

Striker Kevin said, "We are going to fight this all the way. Some of the directors are on £200,000 a year—that's £16,250 a month, a cleaner's yearly wage. We will fight for £15 an hour, we will fight for sick pay and we will fight for travel. These are three things that can be given to us tomorrow."

● RAIL WORKERS in the RMT union are building a national strike ballot. They are fighting for better pay, no compulsory redundancies, and a guarantee there will be no detrimental changes to working practices.

Network Rail has proposed cutting 2,500 safety critical maintenance jobs—a move the union says would make rail accidents more likely.

If the 40,000 workers walked out, Network Rail has estimated it would cost the industry £30 million a day. This could outweigh cost savings rail bosses claim they will make through redundancies.



Defending their pensions

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY

Hackney council sees workers revolt on pay

by ALAN GIBSON

MORE THAN 200 council workers in Hackney, east London, renewed strikes this week in a battle over pay.

They work in refuse, building services and passenger services for those with disabilities and special educational needs.

The Unite union members were set to be out from Tuesday to Thursday against management that is refusing to offer more than the paltry 1.75 percent pay "rise" agreed nationally.

More than 100 council workers celebrated their first three days of strikes at an upbeat rally outside the town hall last Wednesday.

Refuse and cleansing workers joined building maintenance and special education needs and disabilities (Send) workers at the rally.

They heard union shop stewards and supporters thank them for standing up to bosses' attempts to undermine the strike.

Unite shop steward Melvin Drayton said to cheers, "We're not going to tolerate management's threats and bullying." Other strikers



HACKNEY STRIKERS' rallies on their third day of action last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALMAN

talked about how some 50 maintenance staff had foiled management's 5am attempt to undermine the picket lines.

Workers said bosses tried to move refuse trucks out of the depot to a neighbouring road. Agency staff eventually got the trucks moving. But, as one striker said, "We made it clear to them that they can't do this without facing up to us".

Send staff spoke about managers moving buses out

of their depot to residential streets in order to avoid pickets. Again strikers made clear their determination to stop the buses.

Usha, a Send worker, said, "I'm a part-time worker, but because of the pressure we face I end up working full-time".

Another strike, who has worked at Hackney council for 20 years said, "I was earning more money when I joined than I do now.

The 1.75 percent is an insult. We were told we would get a bonus for working all the way through Covid. We ended up with a £5 voucher for Greggs."

Dean, a Unison steward from neighbouring borough Islington, said, "While the billionaires fled to their posh yachts when Covid hit, we really found out who runs society—you lot."

●Tweet messages of support to @UniteLondonEast

REFUSE WORKERS

Coventry strikers take on the rotten Labour council

STRIKING HGV drivers in Coventry held a rally on Tuesday to demand bosses at the Labour-run council "pay the rate".

The workers, on all-out strike, are battling the council's scabbing operation through Tom White Waste, a company that it fully owns. And the council has suspended Unite union rep Pete Randle.

In a recent survey, 67 percent of Coventry residents agreed the demand for market rate pay is reasonable.

The council has tried to turn local people against the strikers by lying about how much they earn.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham has already suspended Unite membership for Coventry's councillors.

Graham said, "It's quite clear that the people of

Coventry are well and truly fed up with the council's conduct during this dispute.

"Only a foolish council would ignore such clear and direct instructions from their own residents."

The 70 drivers began all out action at the end of January, with the dispute and scabbing operation costing the council millions.

In the Coventry council elections this week Socialist Workers called for a vote for Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates.

●March and rally Tue 3 May, 11am, Friargate, CV1 2GN to Coventry Council House, CV1 5RR

●Donate to the strike fund: Unity Trust Bank a/c Unite WM/7116 Branch Coventry Local Government, Sort code: 60-83-01, a/c number: 20302665

●Messages of support to Pete.Randle@uniteunion.org

RUGBY

Rugby fights over low pay

BIN COLLECTION and street cleaning workers in Rugby are halfway through a two-week strike. GMB and Unite union members are fighting over pay.

Only four trucks were out working last week and two had just one collector and loader.

Management is offering workers in the housing department £24 an hour to go out bin collecting. But housing workers are angry that the council is trying to bully them into doing bin collection work.

And Unison union members have also refused to cross a picket line. Unison officials have told them it is not their strike and will not get any strike pay.

●Picket the Council Work Service Unit, 94 Newbold Rd, Rugby, CV21 1DH, 7am-10am daily until Tue 10 May

BIFFA

Battling Biffa over pay

REFUSE collectors employed by Biffa within Wealden District Council in east Sussex began a two-week strike over pay on Monday.

There was strong picketing by GMB union members at the Amberstone depot in Hailsham and the Bellbrook depot in Uckfield.

Strikers were enraged that the Labour-led Hastings Borough Council—unconnected to the dispute—allowed Biffa to use its depots to organise attempted strike-breaking work.

Trade council activists protested at these depots

GMB Sussex branch said, "A Labour council is in bed with a private sector company in a dispute there is nothing to do with them supporting them to bust and undermine our lawful strike action in another local authority."

Wealden is the latest part of the south of England

CWU UNION CONFERENCE

Strikes on the cards in BT and at Royal Mail

by NICK CLARK

WORKERS IN the BT telecoms firm could be heading for a major strike over pay.

The move follows a vote by union activists last week at the CWU union conference.

If it goes ahead, it will be the first strike across all of BT since 1994.

Delegates to the union's telecoms conference voted unanimously to launch a strike ballot. It came after BT bosses imposed a pay increase of £1,500 earlier this month without union agreement.

Though bosses touted the figure as an 8 percent rise for some workers, for others it's as little as 3 percent.

Mick Bagnall from Central Counties and Thames Valley branch said, "How many times are you going to allow this company to kick you before you kick back? The answer has to be no more."

The new pay battle comes after union leaders backed down from a BT strike last year, with a deal that sparked a revolt among branches.

Chris Power from South East Central branch said, "Last year we got bleeding zero percent. We would have been in quite a position to ballot the members for industrial action then."

"We as a branch would have loved to have seen a statutory ballot for action last year."

Steve Donald from Greater Mersey branch argued, "Everyone has got up here and spoken about the cost of living crisis. That's exactly where we are."

"We have to show the members what a bunch of arrogant, selfish, greedy bastards we have at the top."

"We kept collectively the broadband going. We kept schools going. We kept banks making all their money."

"It ends when we get every single one of our members on our side and give a kicking to these arseholes at the top."

Royal Mail workers could also soon begin a new strike ballot in a new fight over pay.

Conference delegates voted to launch a dispute if Royal Mail bosses didn't move on an "insulting" pay offer.

Increase

Bosses at Royal Mail put forward a pay increase of just 3.5 percent—well below inflation—coupled with a raft of new attacks on working conditions.

A motion to CWU postal conference said the union would declare a formal dispute if an acceptable offer was "not in sight" by the end of the week. Previous agreements between bosses and union leaders say there has to be a four-week talking period after declaring a dispute.

But the CWU says if there's no agreement after this, it will launch a ballot. Assistant general secretary Terry Pullinger told delegates not to "let our anger outmanoeuvre ourselves."

But he also told them to prepare for a ballot. "I'm hoping you're angry and that you'll take that anger back with you," he said.

UNISON HEALTH MEETING

NHS pay push

UNION ACTIVISTS in the NHS came together at Unison's health conference in Liverpool last week for the first time in more than two years.

A poor pay settlement last year saw the union ultimately accept a paltry 3 percent rise while inflation soars at three times that level.

Many delegates recognised that the fight for this year's settlement will have to be far more serious.

Sensing the mood, Unison leaders announced a campaign for a rise that beats inflation and "makes good on decades of pay cuts".

Unison is encouraging activists to build for a national day of action over pay on 25 May and wants activity in every branch.

Unison general secretary Christina McAnea called for a large turnout on the TUC union federation's 18 June national demo on pay.

●For more go to socialistworker.co.uk



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TROOPS AND funding are headed to eastern Europe to back war in Ukraine

NATO BOOSTS MILITARY AID FOR WAR IN UKRAINE

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

THE TORIES declared a major escalation to the war in Ukraine last week. They announced 8,000 more troops will soon be sent across Europe.

This latest troop deployment is the largest since the Cold War. Opposition to the plans must be part of the Stop the War Coalition day of action on Saturday of this week.

Commander field army lieutenant general Ralph Wood disse outlined the intentions of the British army.

"The scale of the deployment, coupled with the professionalism, training and agility of the British army, will deter aggression at a scale not seen in Europe this century," he said.

The ministry of defence released details of the deployment last week. It said that operations would see "72 Challenger 2 tanks, 12 AS90 tracked artillery guns and 120

Warrior armoured fighting vehicles deployed to countries from Finland to North Macedonia, demonstrating the army's modernisation into a lethal, agile and global force".

British troops will serve in the Joint Expeditionary Force—a British-led military force made up of other allies.

In a statement, Ben Wallace, the British defence secretary, wrote, "These exercises will see our troops join forces with allies and partners across Nato and the Joint Expeditionary Force in a show of solidarity and strength."

The latest moves are an addition to relentless troop build-ups. Early last month, more than 3,000 British sailors and Royal Marines were deployed to the Arctic Circle, as well as onshore, at sea and in the skies of Norway.

Overall, the Cold Response 2022 involved around 30,000 troops from 27 Nato allies and "partners". And the US continued to pour in weapons



US congress speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky met last weekend

to prop-up Ukraine's military last week.

President Joe Biden asked Congress to accept his proposal to send a £26.25 billion aid package to Ukraine. Around £16 billion of this is military aid.

Democrat house of representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi also met with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky in Kiev to underline that Ukraine must inflict defeat on Russia.

Pelosi told a news conference in Poland, "America stands with Ukraine. We stand with Ukraine until victory is won. And we stand with Nato."

Meanwhile Poland has confirmed that it has sent 240 Soviet-designed T-72 tanks to Ukraine.

The country has already given Ukraine around half of its T-72s.

Poland recently signed a £3.8 billion deal to buy 250 M1A2 Abrams SEPv3 tanks

from the US to make up for this. Sweden also stepped closer to joining Nato, despite large numbers of Swedish people opposing the move.

Swedish prime minister Magdalena Andersson said that Nato membership could be agreed without a national vote. She thinks a referendum would be a "bad move."

Andersson added, "There is a lot of information about national security that is confidential, so there are important issues in such a referendum that cannot be discussed and important facts that cannot be put on the table."

In a recent survey, just 51 percent of Swedes were in favour of joining Nato. Only a week previously 45 percent favoured joining the military alliance.

Meanwhile Russia has responded to the stepping up of Western military support. Maria Zakharova, a spokesperson for Russia's ministry of foreign affairs, accused the West of using

leaders in Ukraine to carry out their own aims.

She warned, "Advisers from Western countries staying in Ukraine's decision-making centres will not necessarily be a problem for Russia's response measures.

"We do not advise to continue trying our patience."

Nato countries are also in fear of their own people.

This was made clear when the Spanish government unveiled a series of repressive measures to crush protests for June's Nato summit in Madrid.

The Spanish Interior Ministry will deploy 12,000 police officers, who will join another 12,000 officers from the capital region and 1,000 city police. In total Madrid will be a city under siege by 25,000 cops.

International day of action for peace in Ukraine on Sat 7 May. Glasgow demonstration: assemble Blythswood Square, 12 noon, for march to George Square for rally. For details in your area of Britain go to bit.ly/STW0705